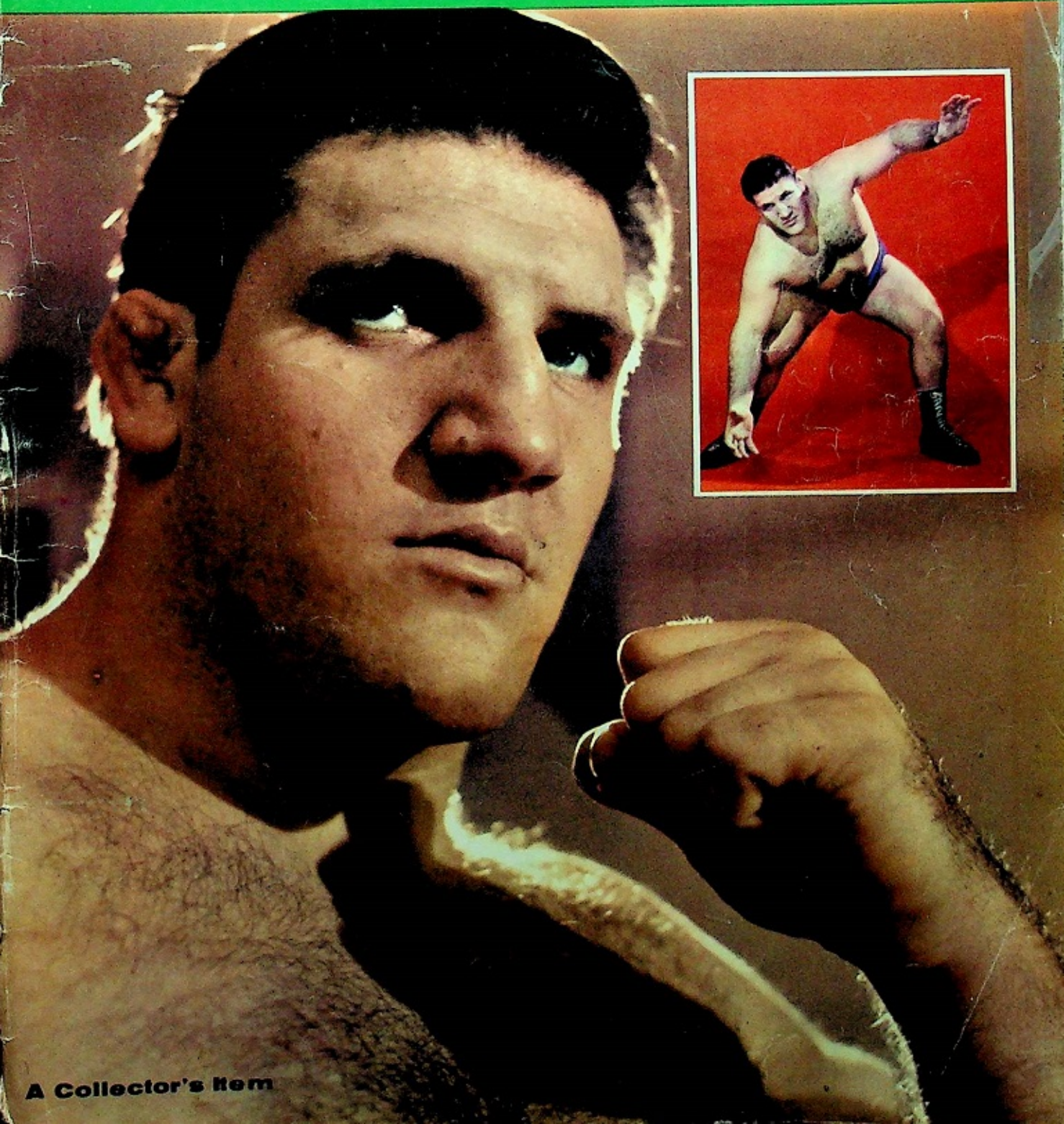
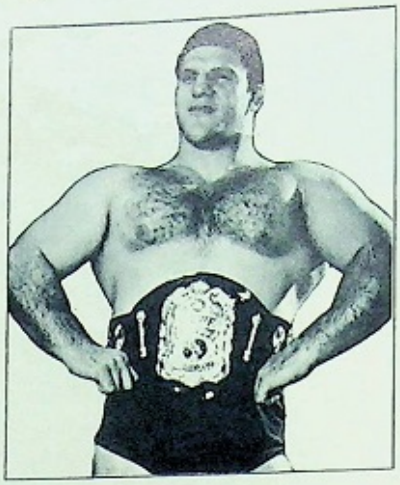
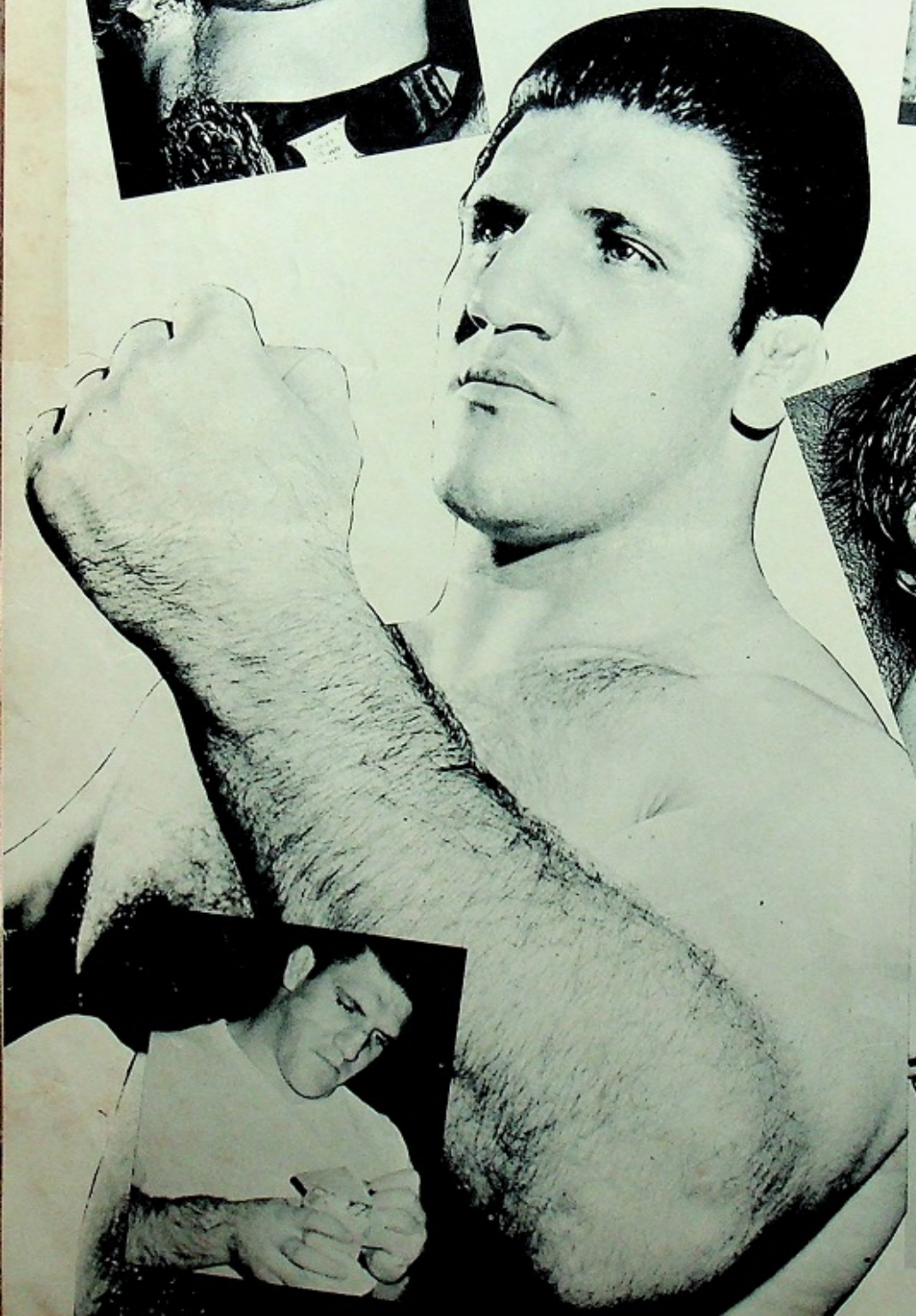
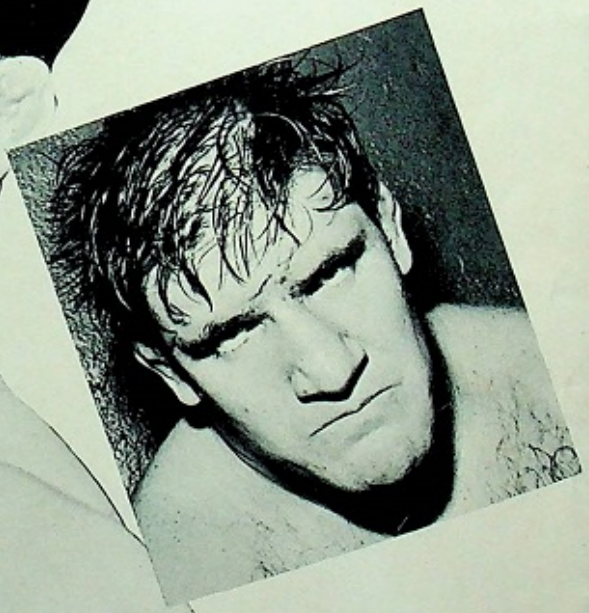
BRUNO



A Collector's Item







BRUNO SAMMARTINO

BRUNO IS THE GREATEST...

When you speak of wrestlers, whether it's today's or those of a bygone era, each and every fan has their own favorites. You can argue long and loud on the skills of the various matmen.

However when it comes to fan appeal – the ability to fill the arenas, show after show, week after week, year after year – there can be no argument.

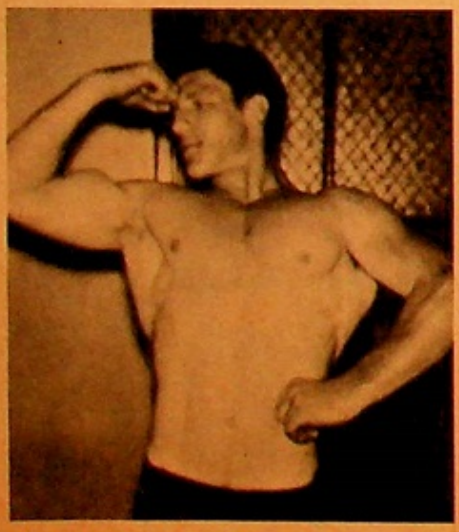
There is only one *wrestler who during the decade of the "Swinging Sixties" stood out, head and shoulders, above the rest – BRUNO SAMMARTINO.*

Sammartino, the strong boy who came out of Abruzzi, Italy, to conquer the hearts of the wrestling fans world over from New York to Tokyo, from Boston to Melbourne, is without a doubt – THE GREATEST.

These photos of Bruno and his family were taken 19 years apart. Left: standing, brother Paul (L), Bruno age 15; seated, his sister Mary, mother Emily and father Alfonso. In the photo on the right his Mother and Dad have changed positions.

The arrow points to the house in the village of Pizzoferrato in the province of Chieti where Bruno was born.

(Above) A recent photo of Bruno and his lovely wife Carol, (below) and the whole Sammartino family, David 9, and twins Darrell and Denny 2½.



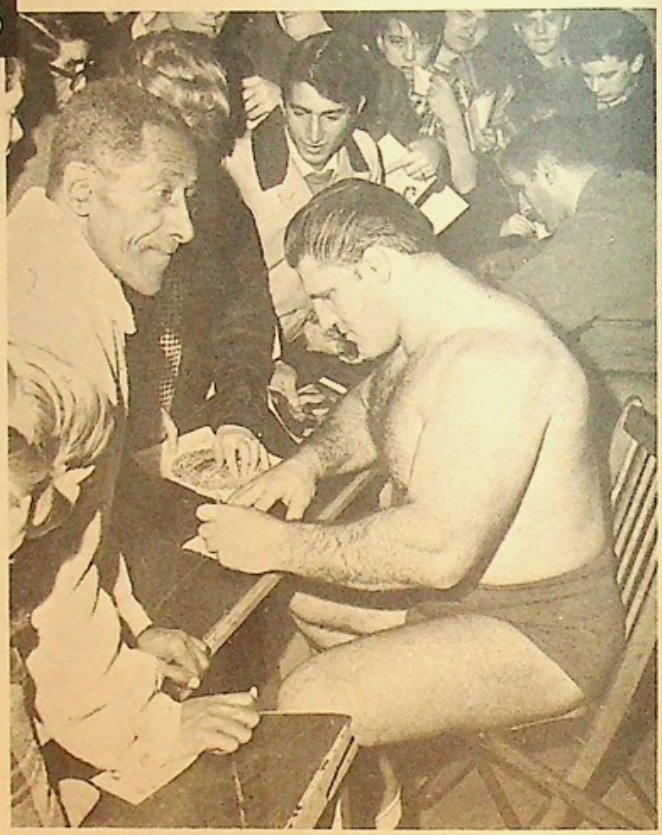
When he was only a youngster (14), Bruno already was on the way to developing that massive body.

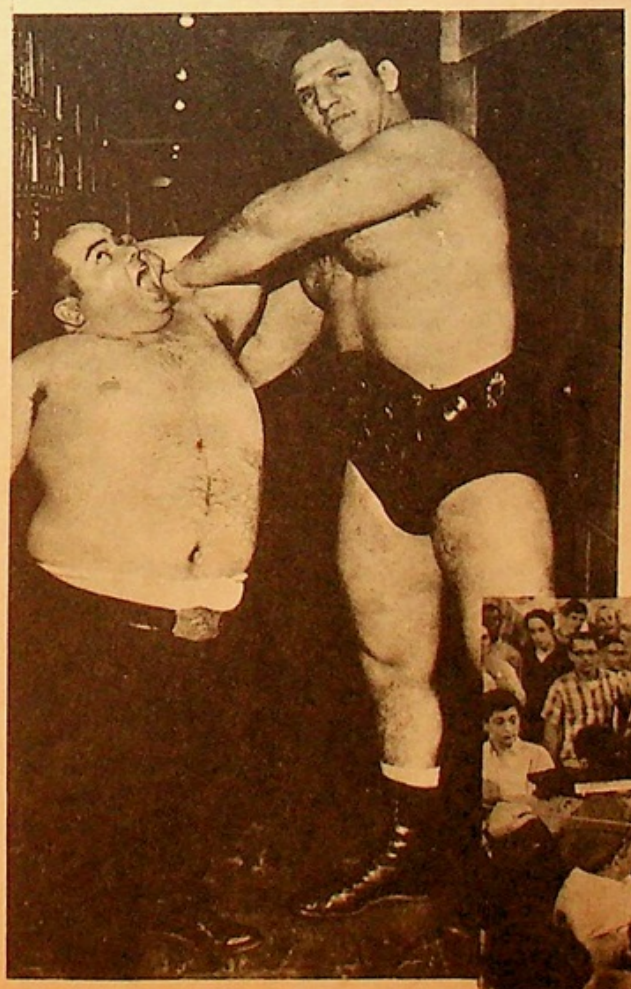
Bruno is in good company. On his left, Conn. State Athletic Commissioner Dinty McMahon, and World-Wide Wrestling Federation President Willie Gilzenberg, and on his right, Joe Walker, then New Jersey State Athletic Commissioner.

Bruno being presented with the trophy for winning the "World's Most Popular Wrestler" by Wrestling Revue Editor Lew Eskin, assisted by Ray Morgan ("The Voice of Wrestling" to Millions of Bruno's fans).

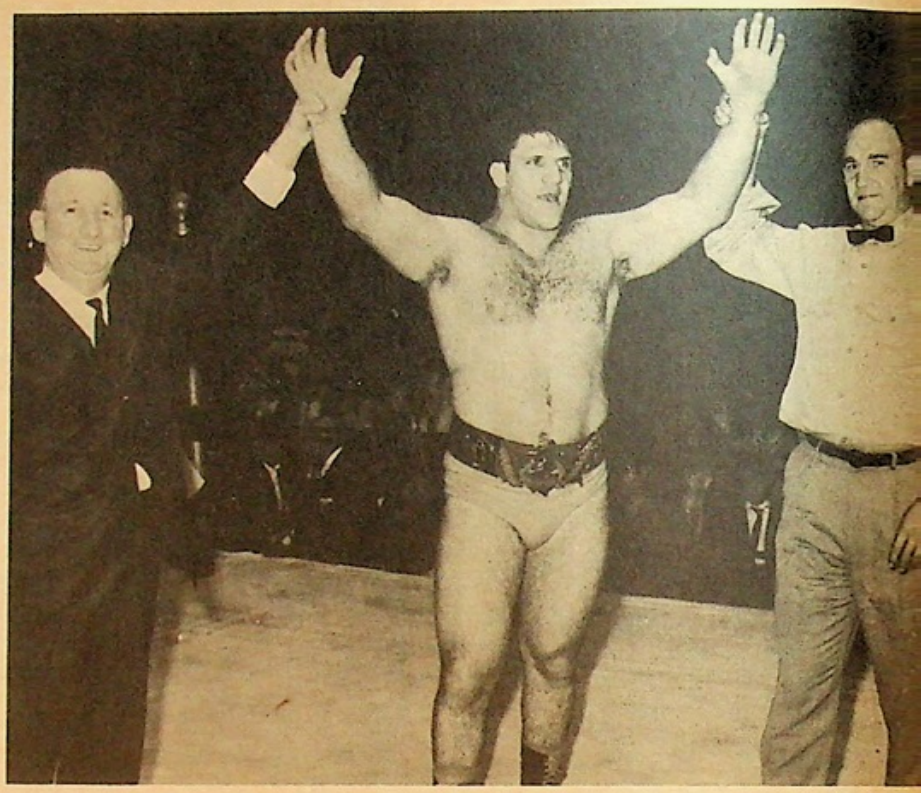
Bruno and Promoter Vince McMahon, a close friend of Bruno's, who has guided his wrestling career. McMahon calls Bruno "The greatest athlete as well as the greatest wrestler of all time."

BRUNO AND HIS FANS

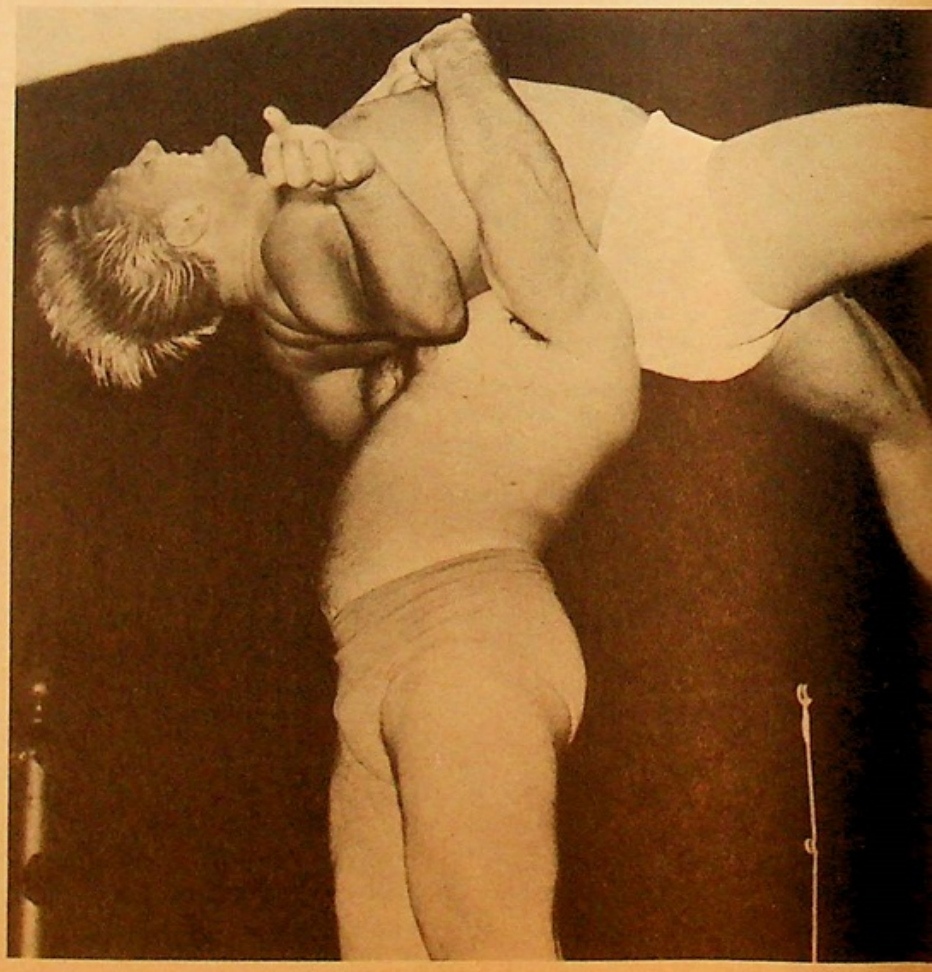




A long-lasting love affair is the one between Bruno and the fans. Wherever he appears — whether it is to wrestle or for some personal reason — he is soon mobbed. Unlike many in the public eye, Bruno has never said "No" to the fans and he (like most wrestlers) does an awful lot of charity work that never makes the headlines. "Just knowing I've helped is reward enough for me" says Bruno.



BRUNO WINS BELT



Sammartino became WWFW champion when he stunningly defeated Buddy Rogers in Madison Square Garden, New York, on May 17, 1963, in only sixty-eight seconds. He has been the most popular champion of all time since then.

Sammartino scored a big hit when he appeared on the Alan Burke TV show last year. Unlike many sports stars, Sammartino held his own with the acid-tongued Burke.

BRUNO ON THE ALAN BURKE TV SHOW

Sammartino has his own show over radio station WBFM, covering all subjects not only sports, and he is also a frequent guest on the WIIC-TV wrestling show, lending a helping hand to Director Jack Elias.

A frustrated opera singer, and one of the great opera buffs, Bruno sings a duet with tenor Frank Corelli.

Growing up in Italy, it was natural that Primo Carnera would be Bruno's idol. It was a great thrill for him when he and Carnera appeared on the same wrestling card back in the early 1960's.

Sammartino and world middleweight boxing champion Nino Benvenuti have become close friends. Bruno Amaducci, Nino's manager, lends a helping hand in vain as they try to make Sammartino knuckle down.

Australian tennis star Ken Rosewell finds the mighty arm of Sammartino a perfect device for his chinning exercises.

Pittsburgh's TV favorite Bill Cardille calls Bruno "The Sweetest Guy in the World." The two natives of the "Smoky City" have each reached the top in their chosen professions (L). Another radio personality who is a big fan of Bruno's is Red McCarthy of Harrisburg, Pa. (R).

Bruno and the Great Durante. Jimmy is an avid sports fan, who counts Bruno among his friends as well as a hero, and Bruno just loves "The Shnozz", even if he isn't a Caruso.

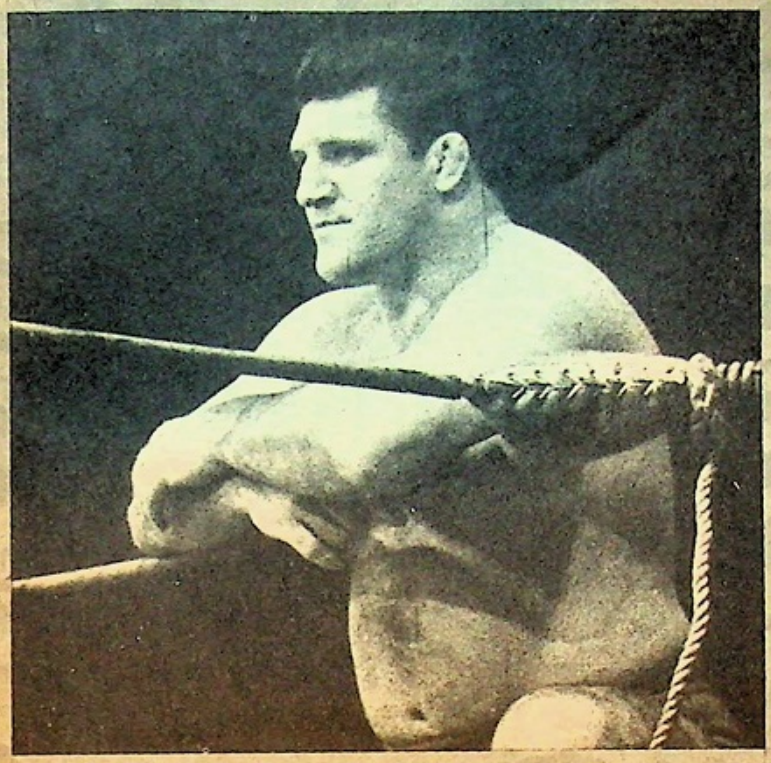
Bruno gives World Women Wrestling champion Fabulous Moolah a lift.

Ray Fabiani, (r) with Bruno and Frank Corelli, is not only the Philadelphia Wrestling Impresario, but also runs the Philadelphia Lyric Opera Company. Singer Mel Torme finds Bruno too tough in a game of arm wrestling.

The winner of the "Bruno Sammartino Purse" at Suffolk Downs in 1968 was Dependability, a real omen for hunch players. With Bruno is the happy winner and owner W. H. Grinold, trainer M. J. Bresnahan and jockey Tommy Sisum.

BRUNO AT THE FAIR

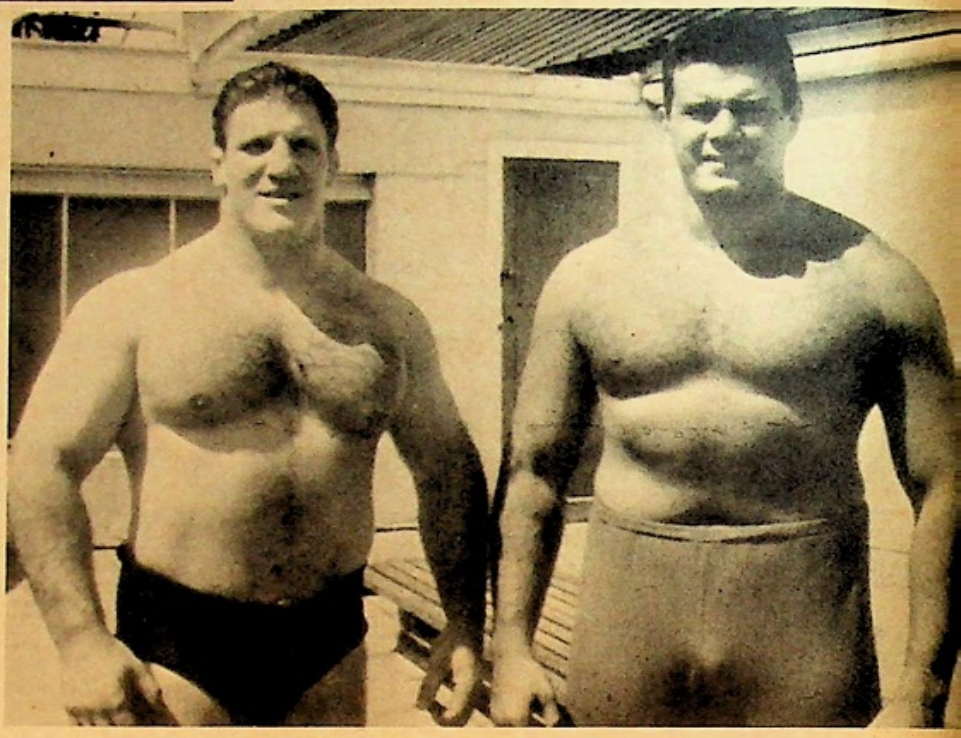
The largest crowd to visit the Shaefer Circle Of Sports Exhibit was the one that turned out when Bruno was the guest of the day. Sammartino was the only wrestler to leave his imprint at the Fair during its two-year run, a tribute to his prestige in the sports world.



CANDID SHOTS OF BRUNO

The pictures on this page are among the millions that have been taken of Bruno by his fans. He is the most photographed man in sports.

BRUNO AND HIS PALS

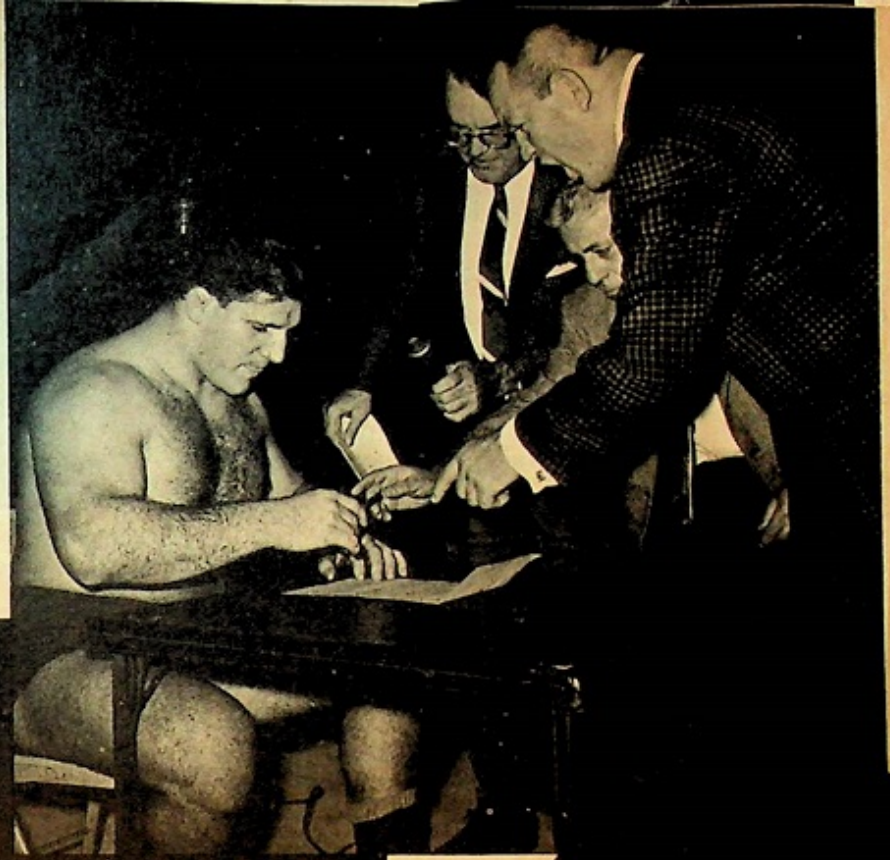


Bruno met Spiros Arion while on tour in Australia and encouraged the Greek star to come to America where he became a big hit.

Victor Rivera, the fast-rising young Puerto Rican star, gets a few pointers from Sammartino.

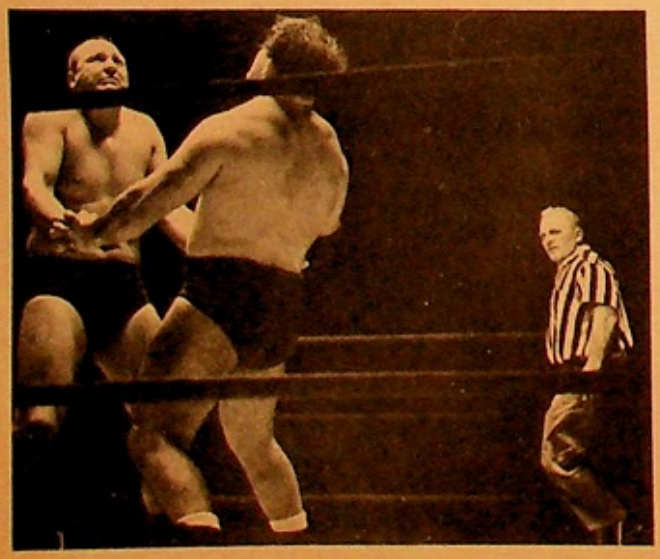
Mario Milano, Bruno's Pasan, has recently joined Sammartino to form a very successful tag-team.

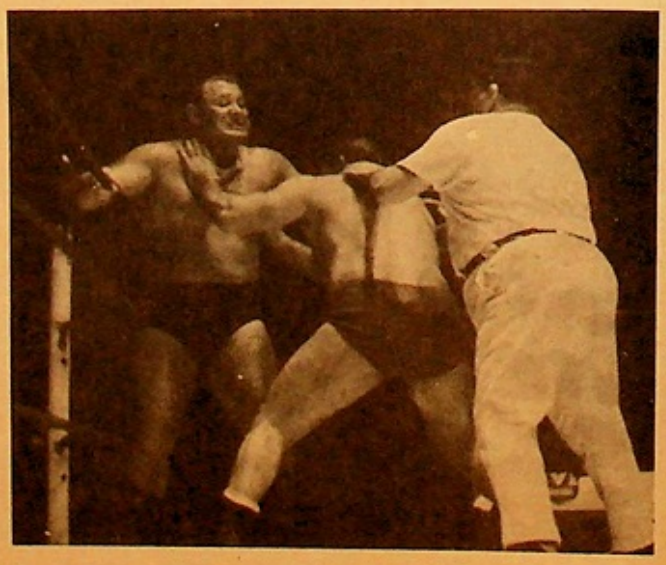
Sammartino has engaged in hundreds of thrilling bouts, and the list of those outstanding matmen whom he has defeated would fill a book by itself, but in Gene Kiniski Bruno had a rival who possessed skill, strength and viciousness second to none. Their rivalry back in 1965-66 thrilled the fans and filled the arenas.

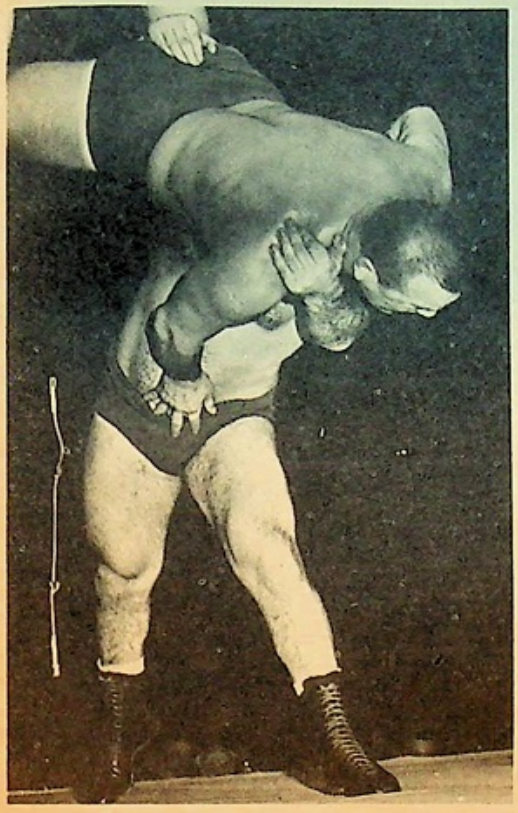


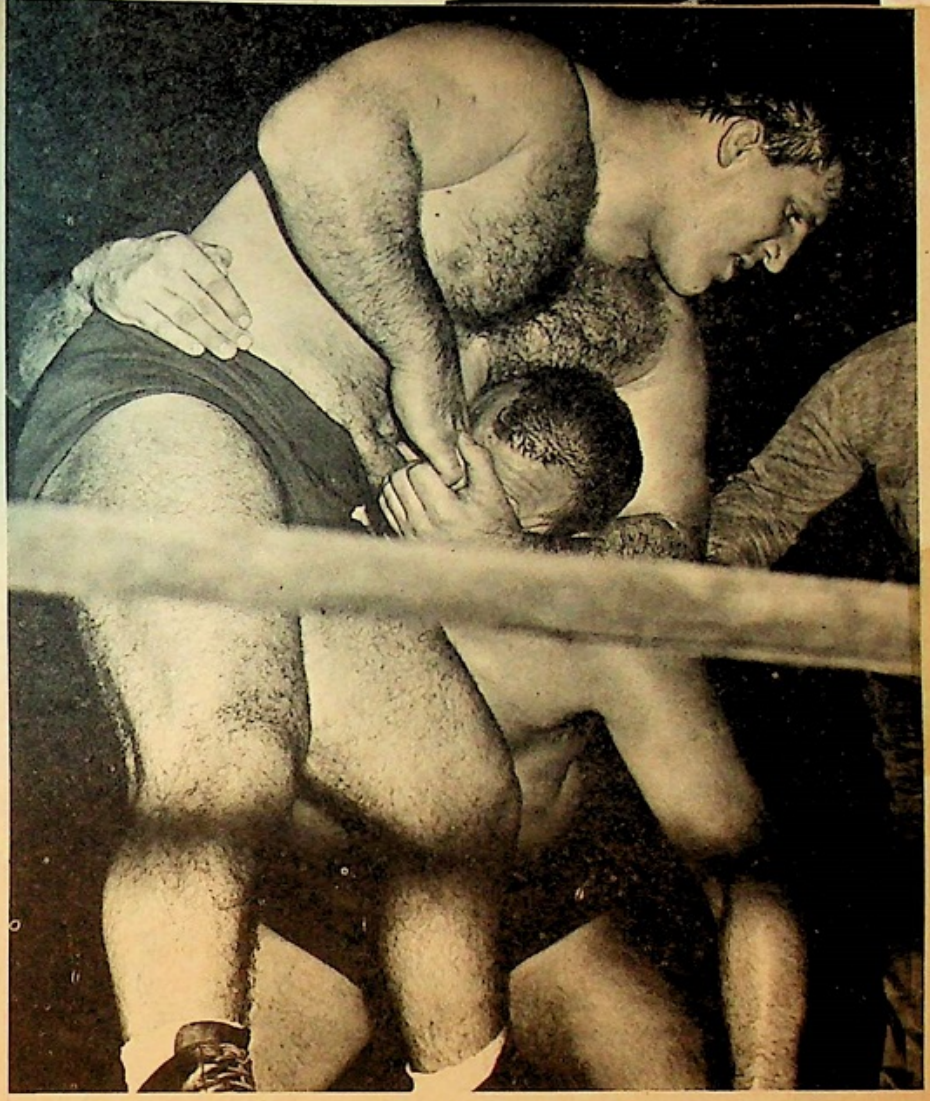
BRUNO VS KINISKI

The photos on this page graphically tell the story of the fierce competition between these two giants of the wrestling world.

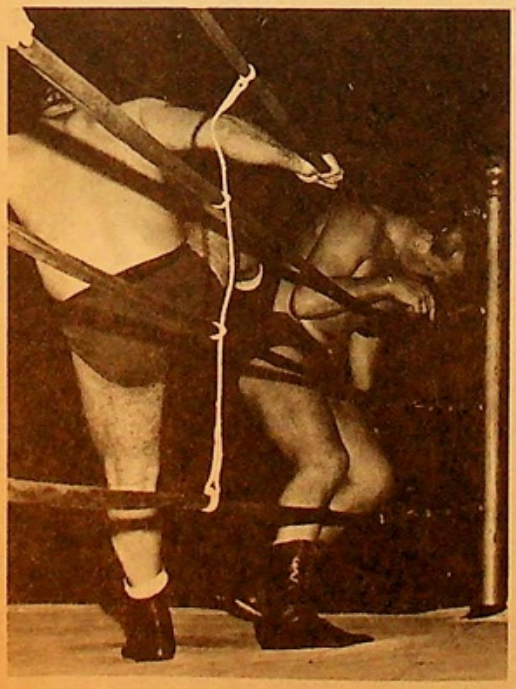


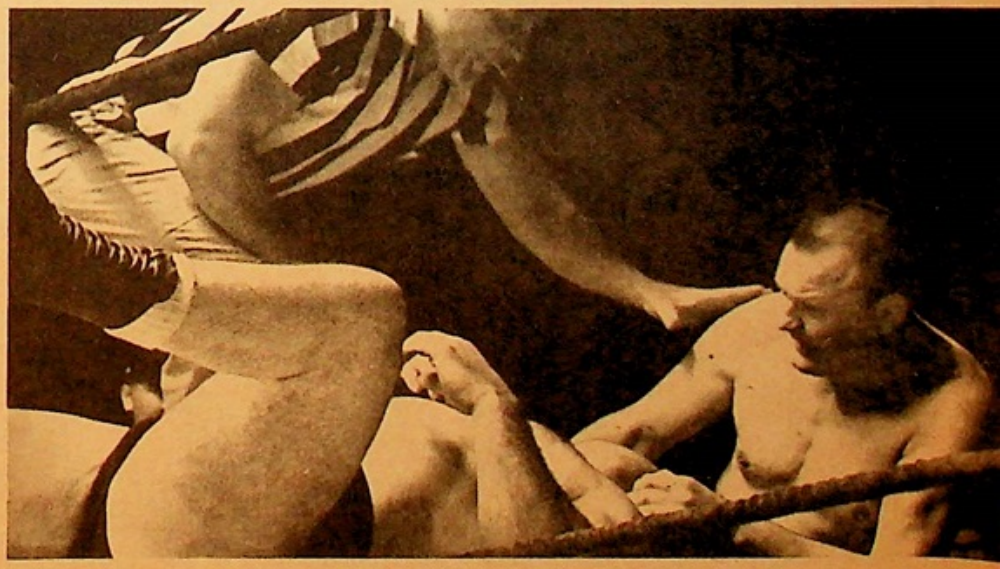




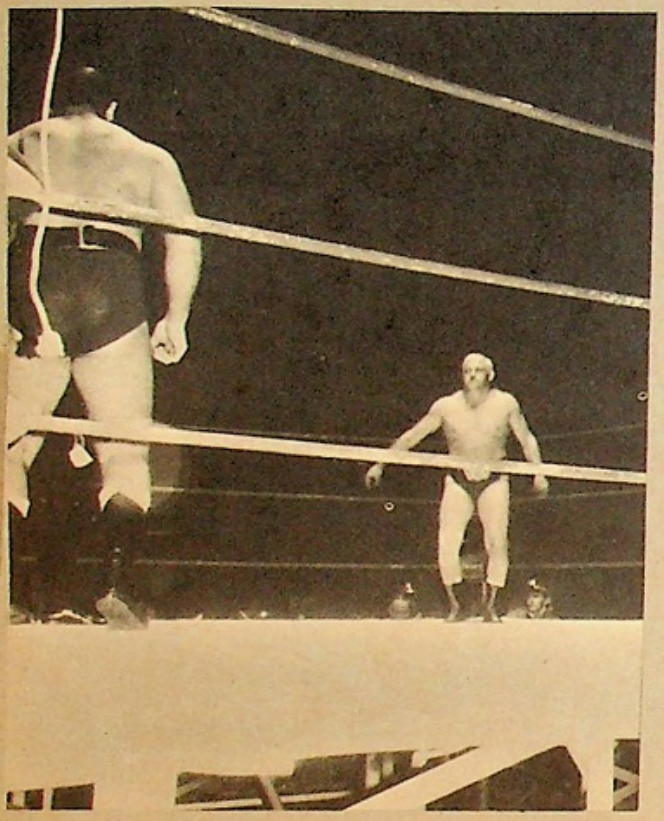


Sammartino, true to his Latin heritage, is quick to anger. But he says: "Kiniski is the only man I really hated and wanted to cripple."

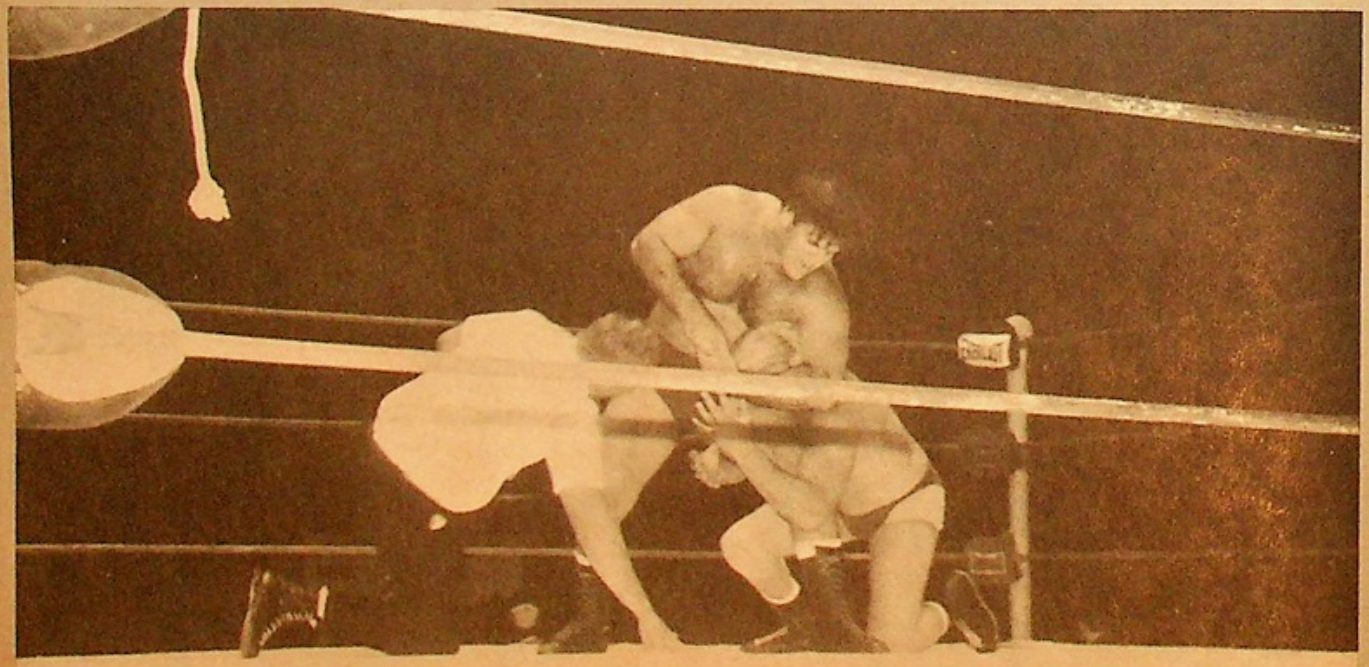


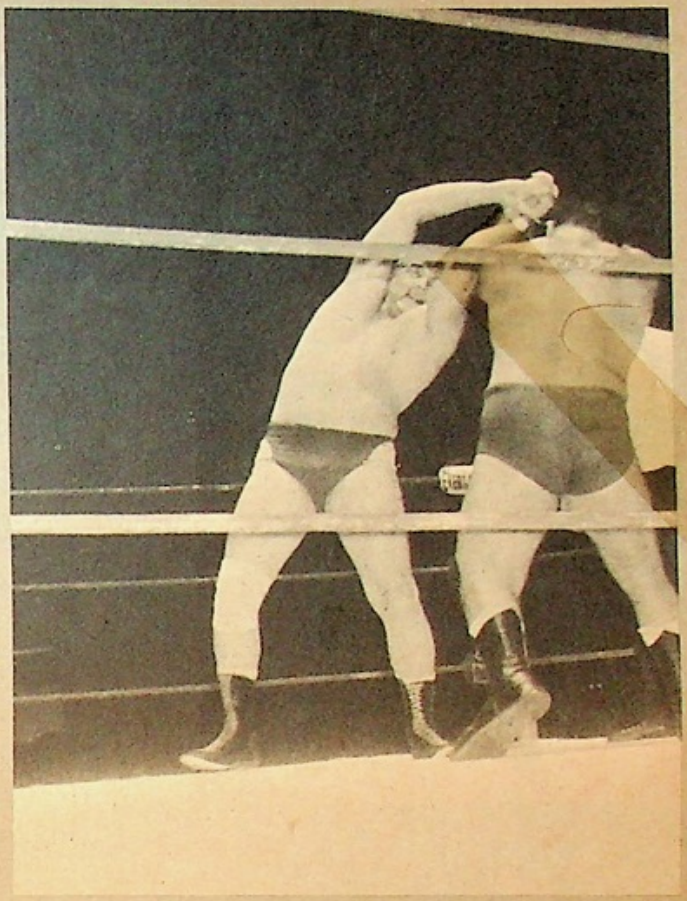


BRUNO VS STEVENS

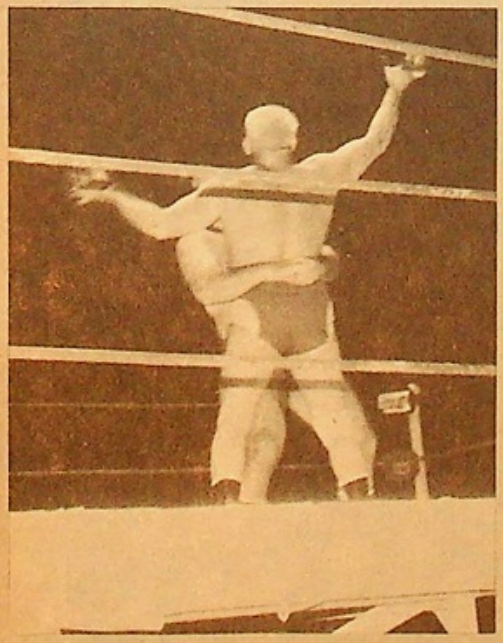


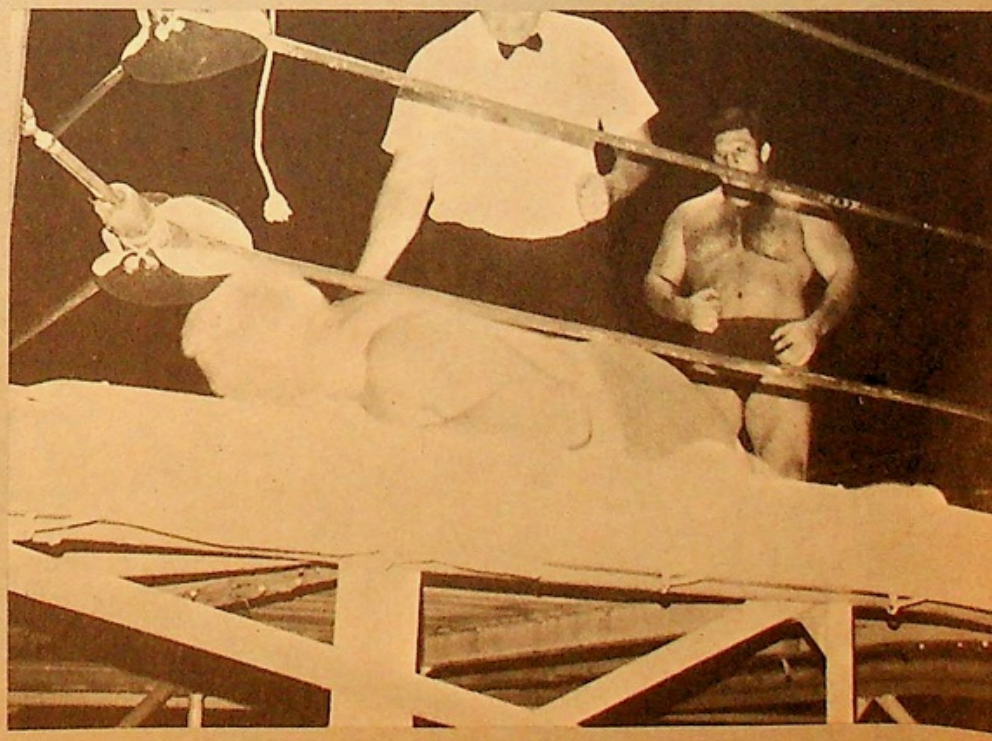
Sammartino invaded San Francisco to take on The Blond Bomber, Ray Stevens. Their two clashes not only filled the arena, but left the fans limp from the torrid action. . .



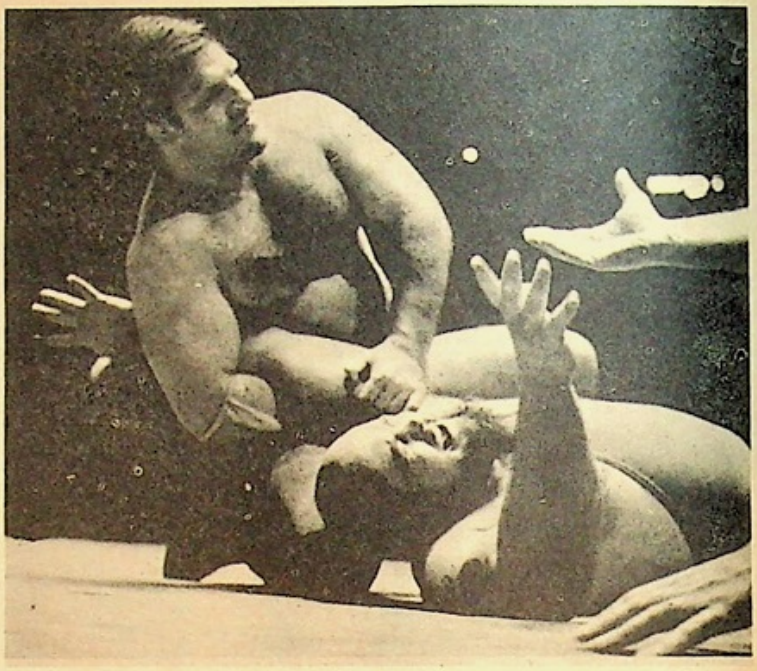


Words alone can not begin to describe the fire of the battle between these two, so we will let the camera tell the story for us.



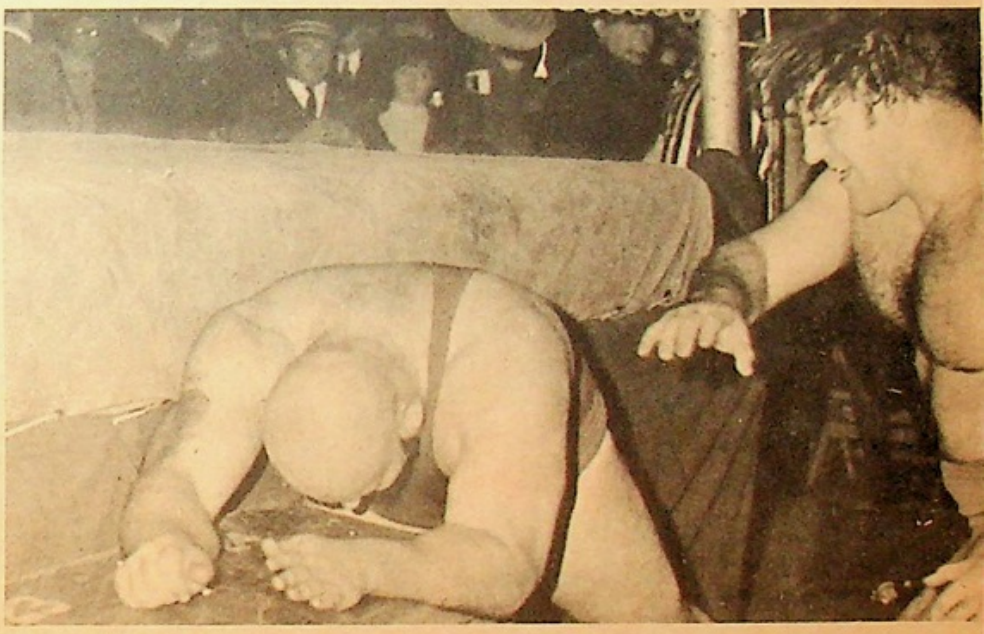


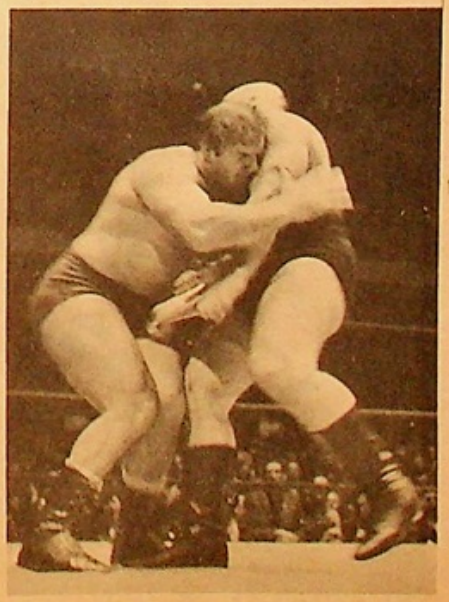
BRUNO VS KOLOFF



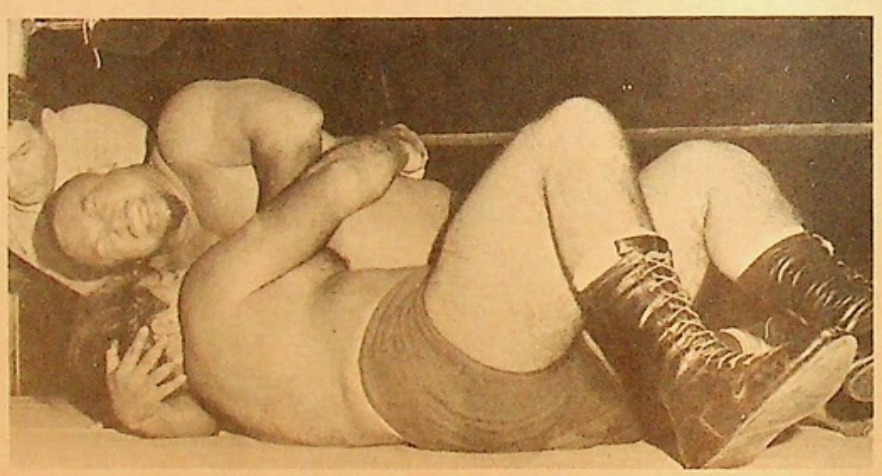
The Russian giant Yvon Koloff, a brutish bear of a man, who — like Sammartino — employs a crushing bear-hug to subdue his rivals, engaged in some brutal struggles with Bruno. . .

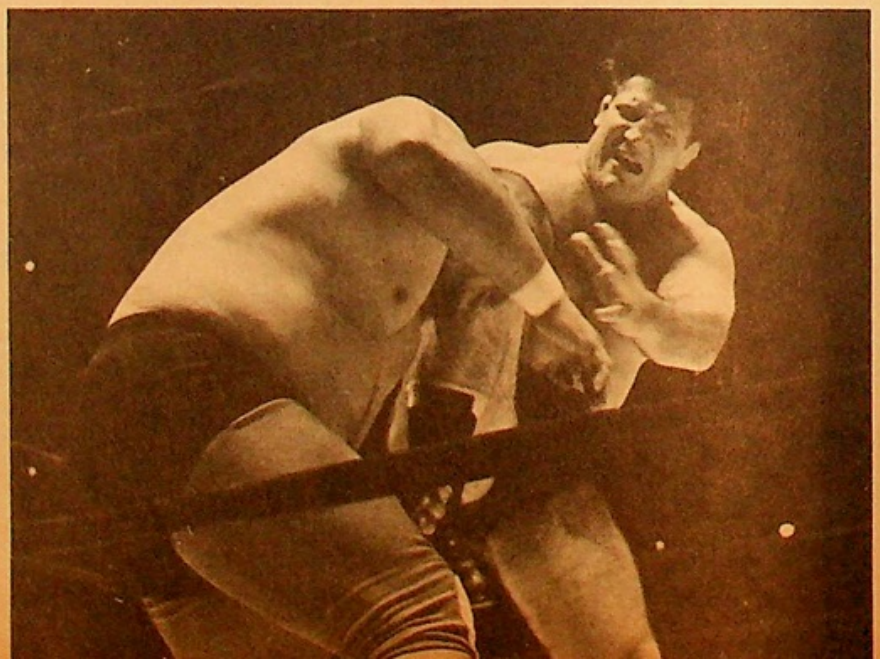
However, try as he could, by fair means or foul, he wasn't able to defeat Sammartino. When it came down to a test of strength, the collision sent Koloff spinning out of the ring.

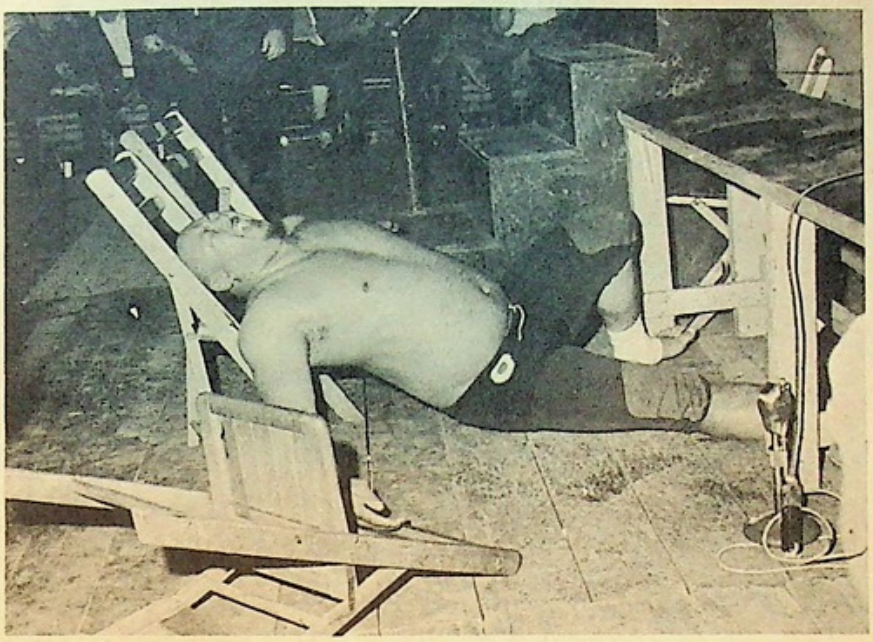




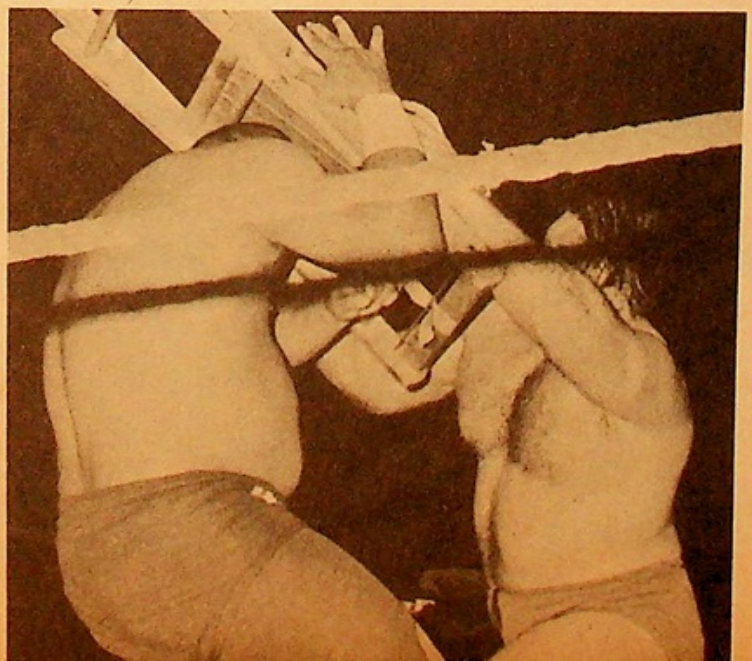
BRUNO VS TANAKA

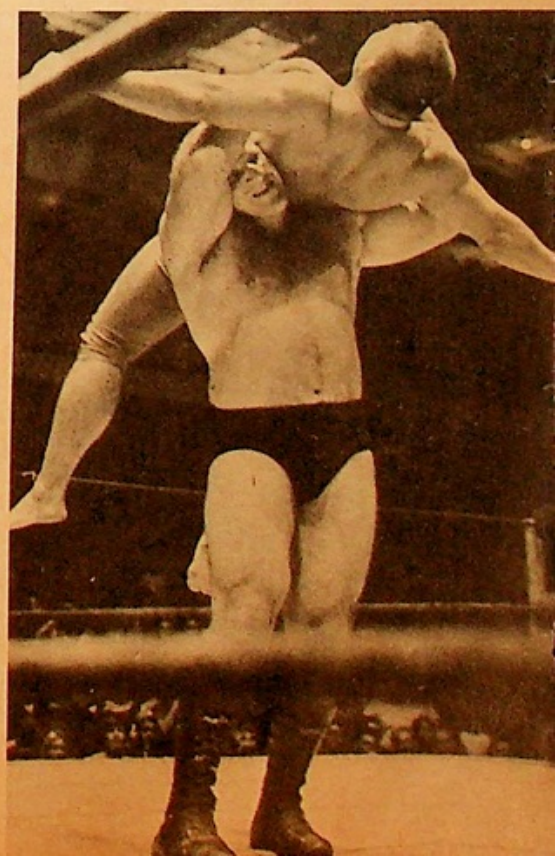




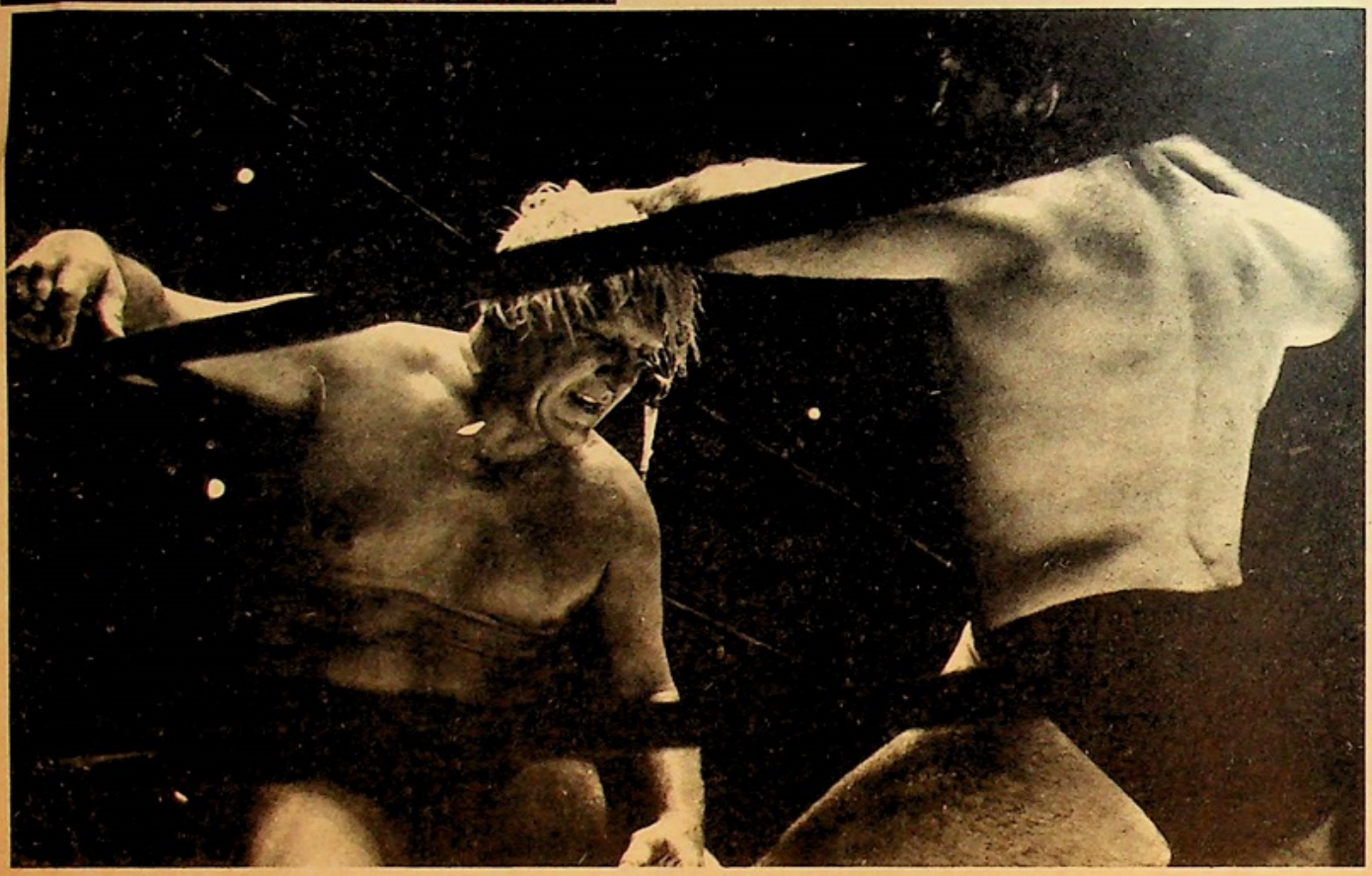


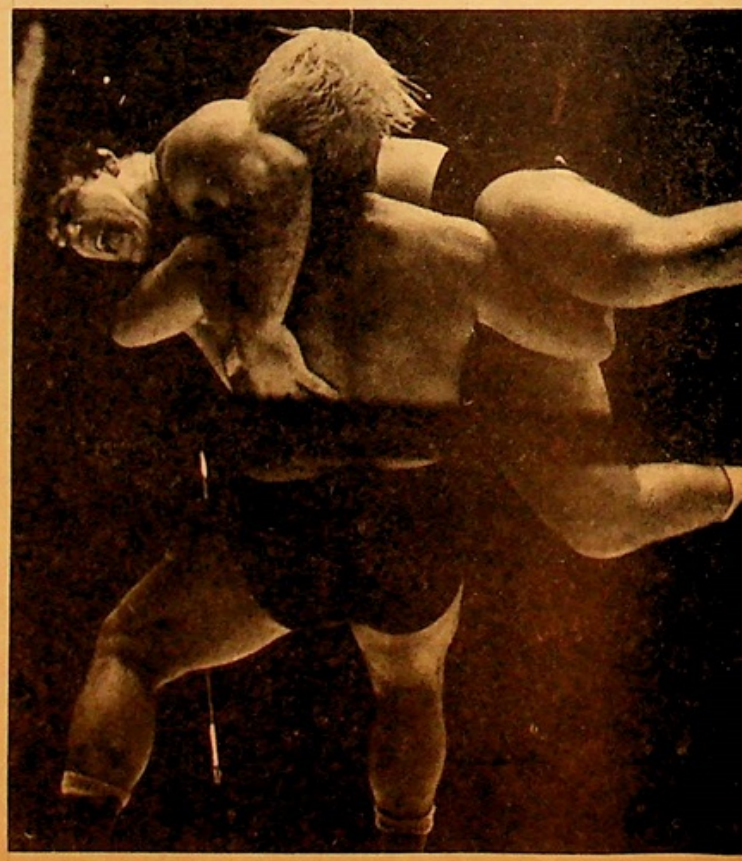
Of all the villainous men to climb into a ring against Sammartino, Prof. Tanaka, the Karate expert was one of the most dangerous. He, too, tried every means to whip Bruno but failed, and even his attempt to use a chair as a weapon was turned against him.

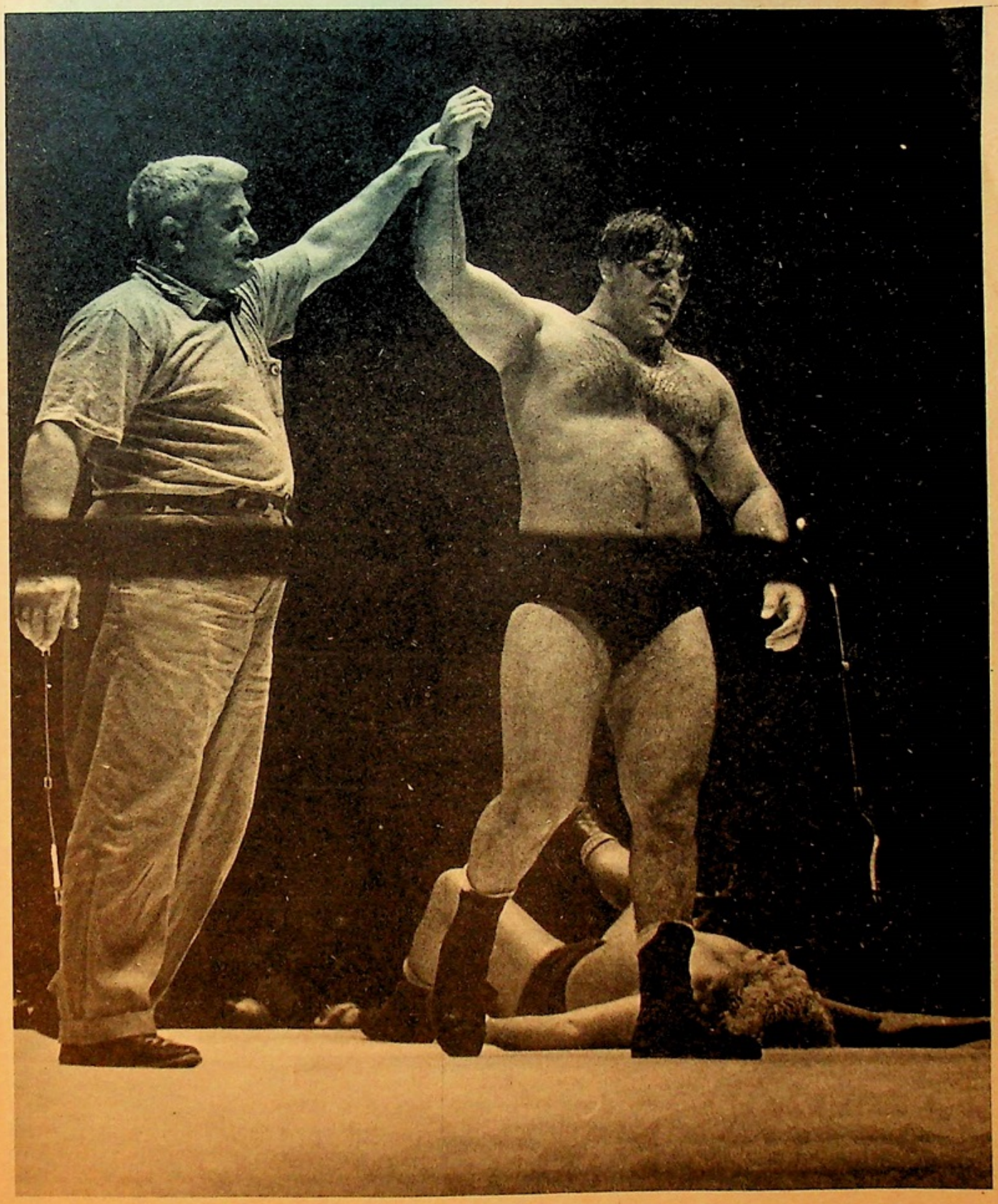




BRUNO VS BLASSIE

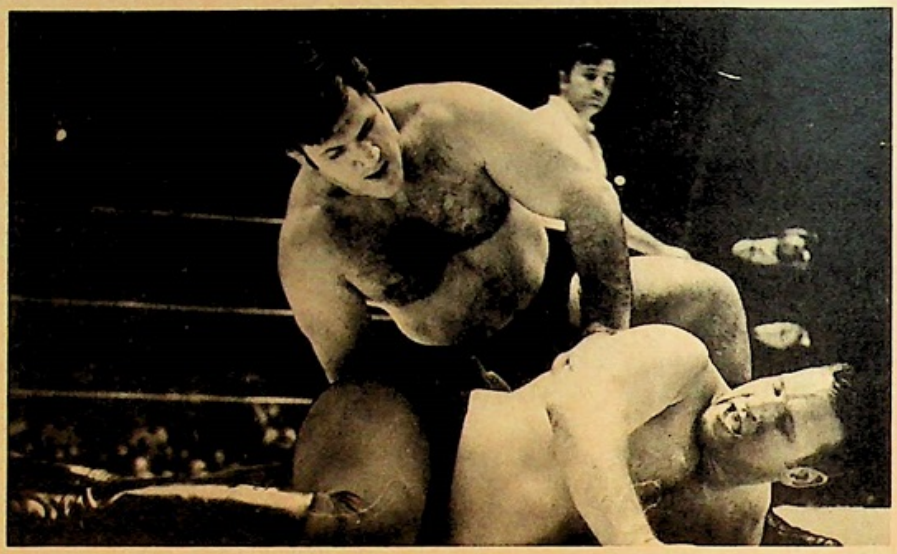


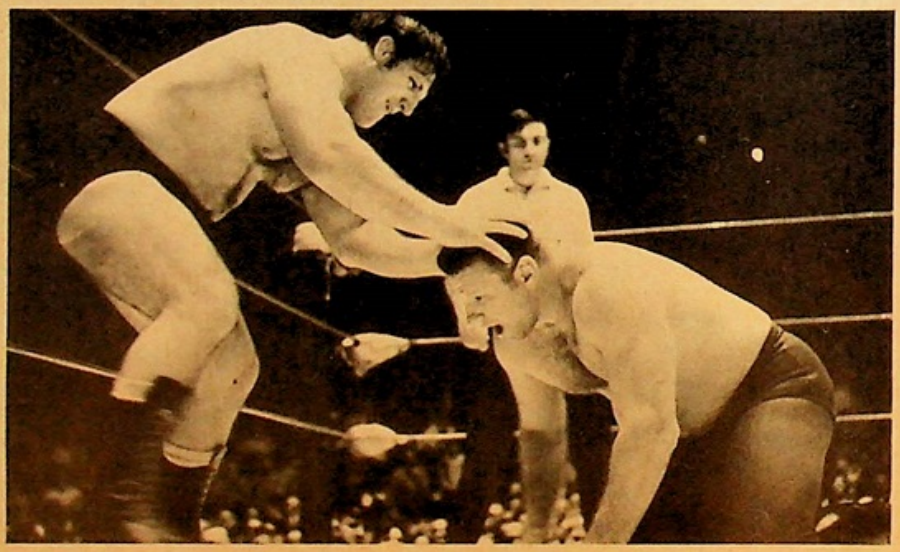


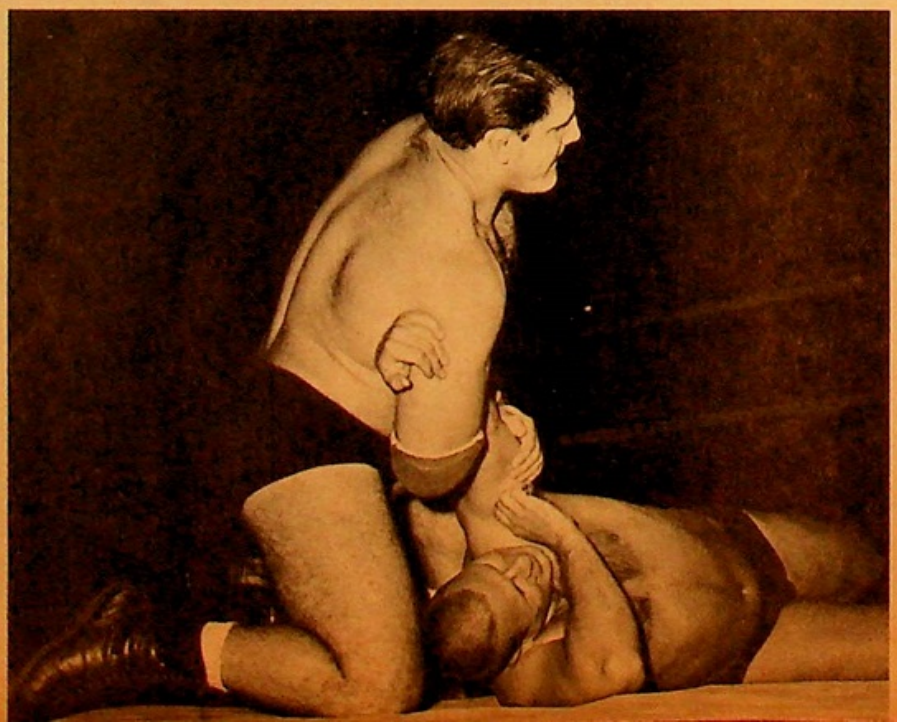


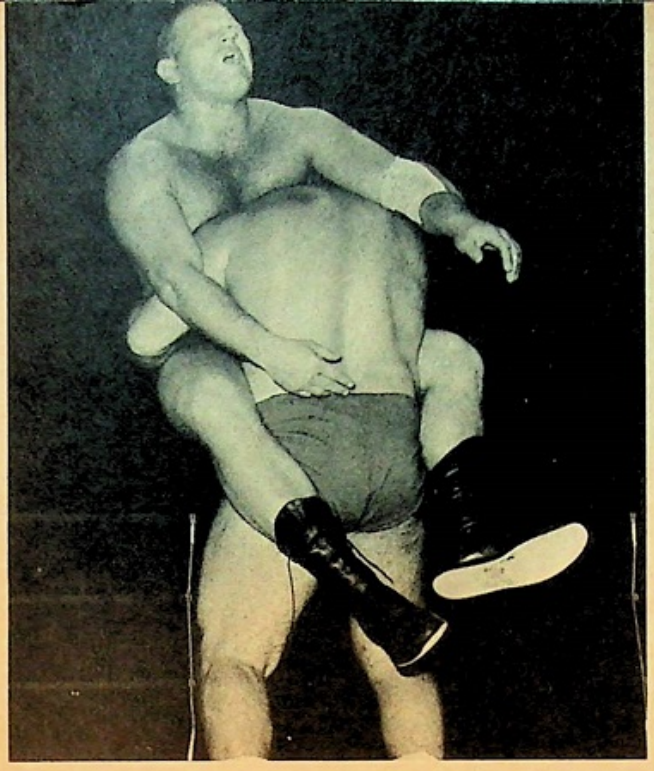
Bloodthirsty Fred Blassie was another who tried and failed to defeat Bruno. Their struggles during 1966-7 were classics, with Bruno absorbing terrific punishment, but his great courage and stamina won out in the end.

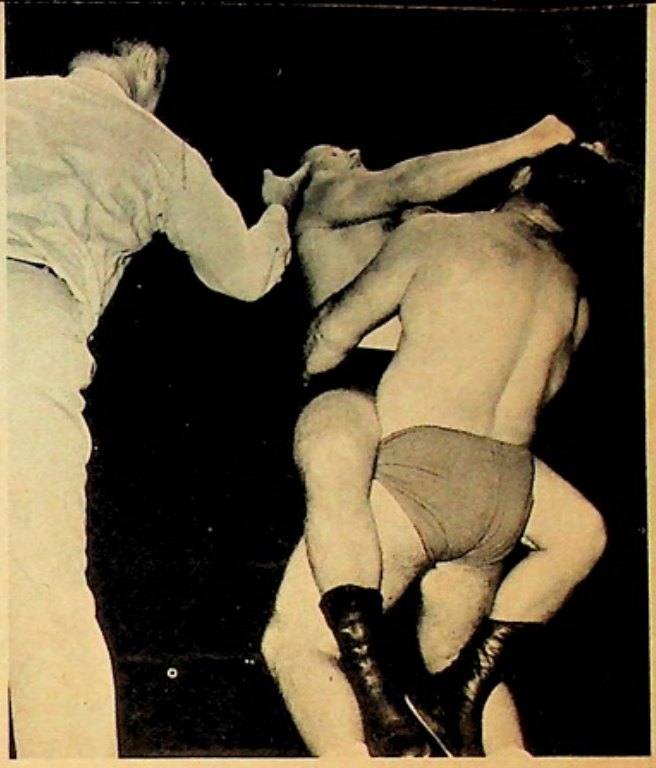
BRUNO VS VON ERICH



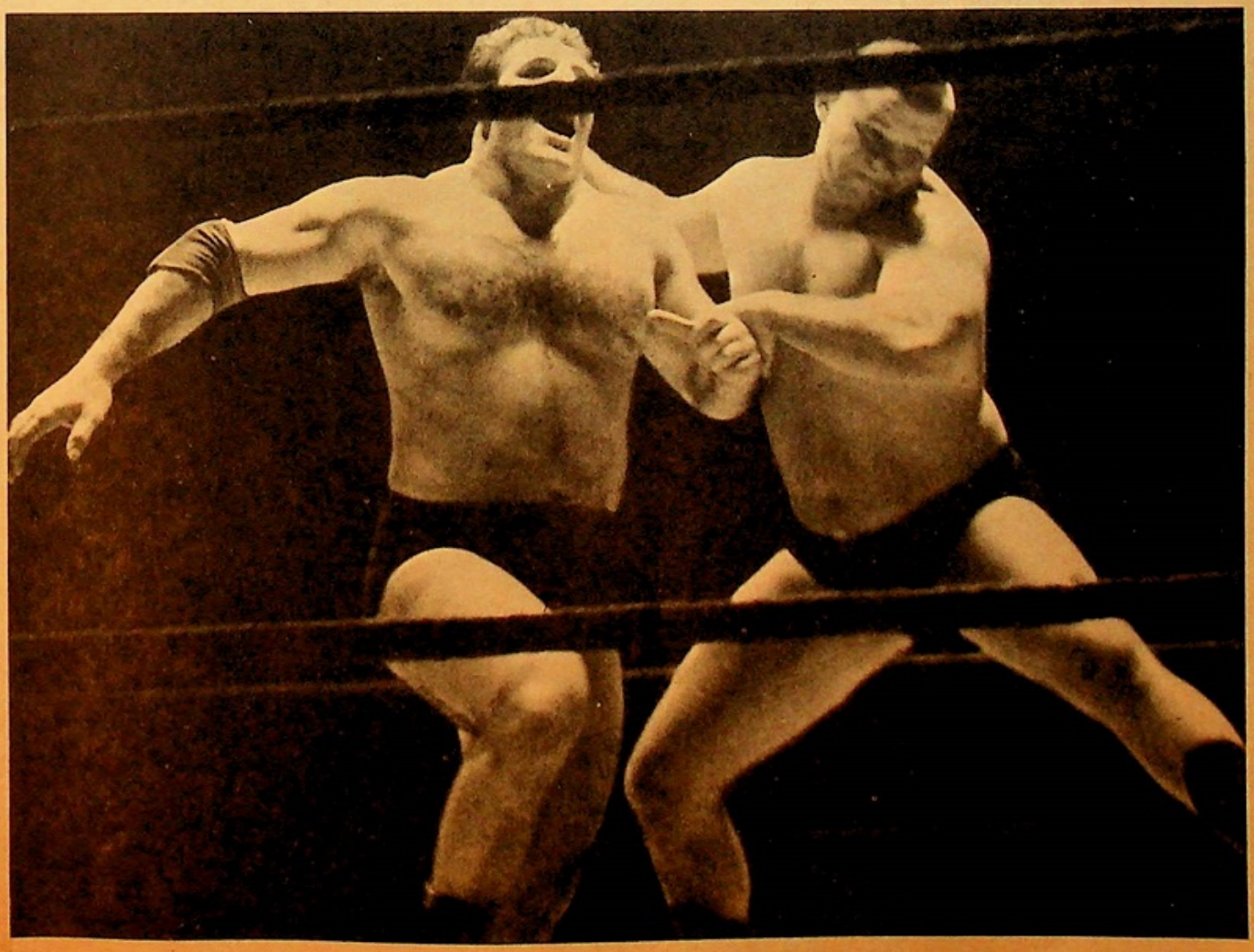


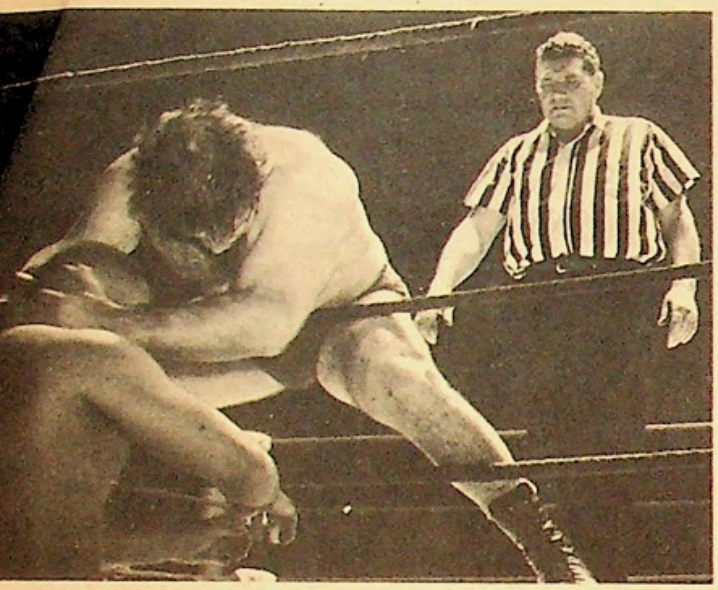


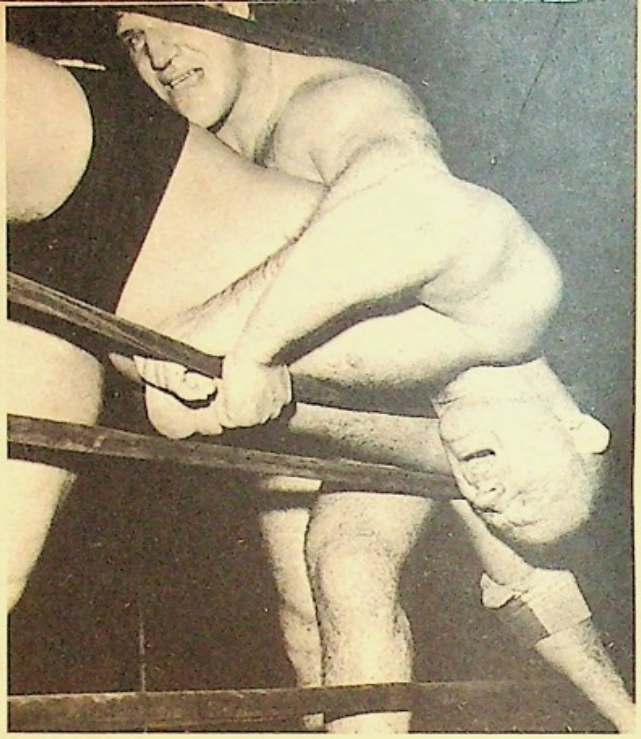


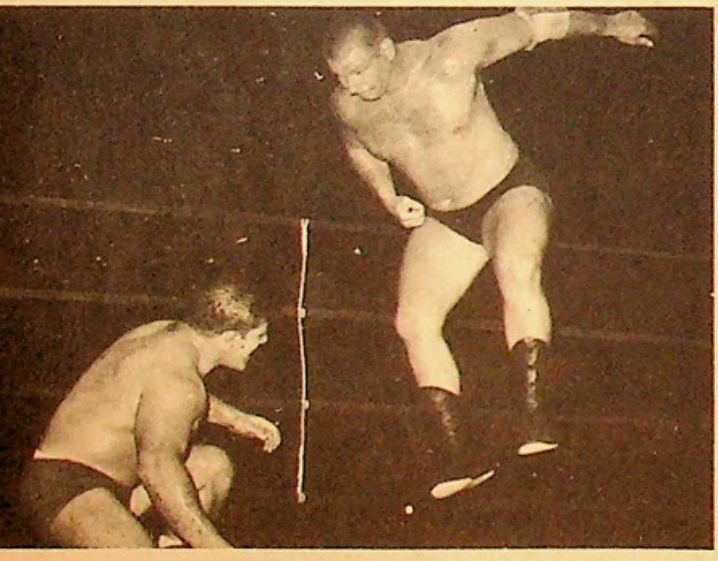


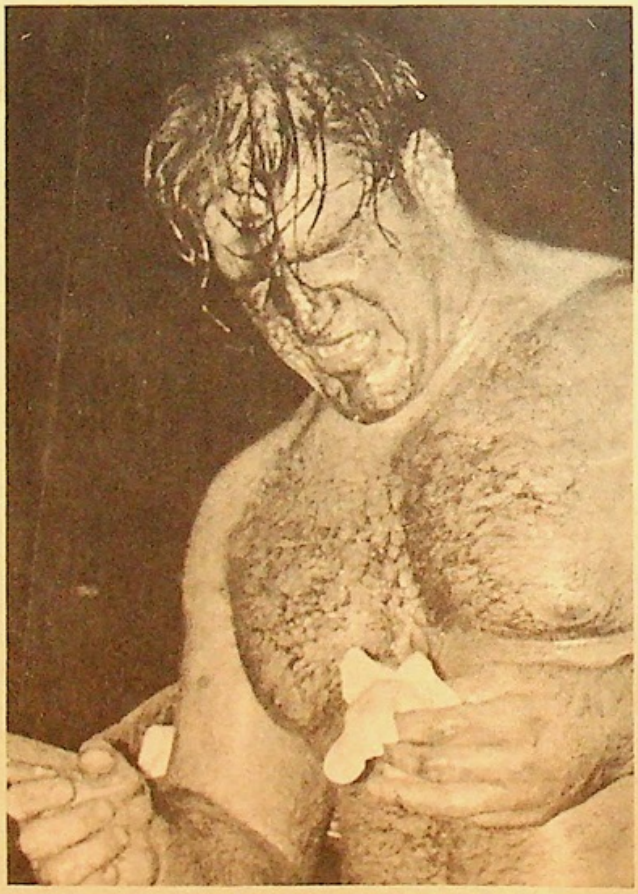
To most of the fans Waldo Von Erich has been the longest standing and toughest rival to challenge Bruno's right to the throne. The powerful German combines meanness with ability and a touch of sadism that has made their long rivalry a bloody and bitter one.

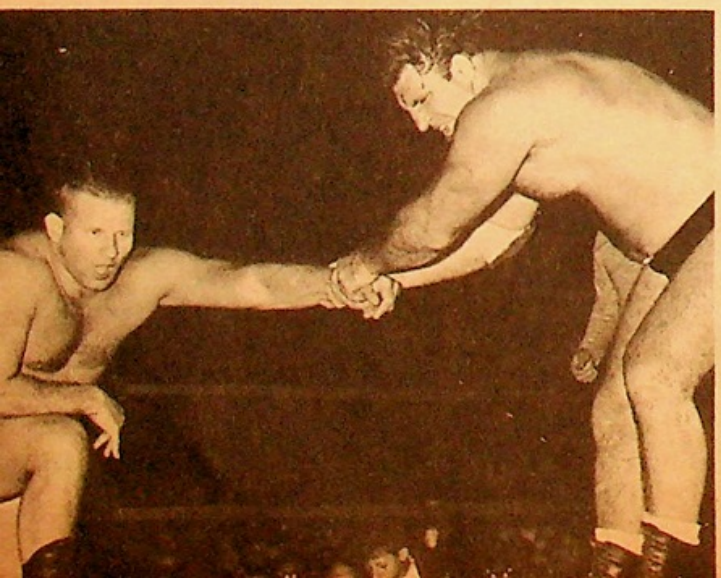






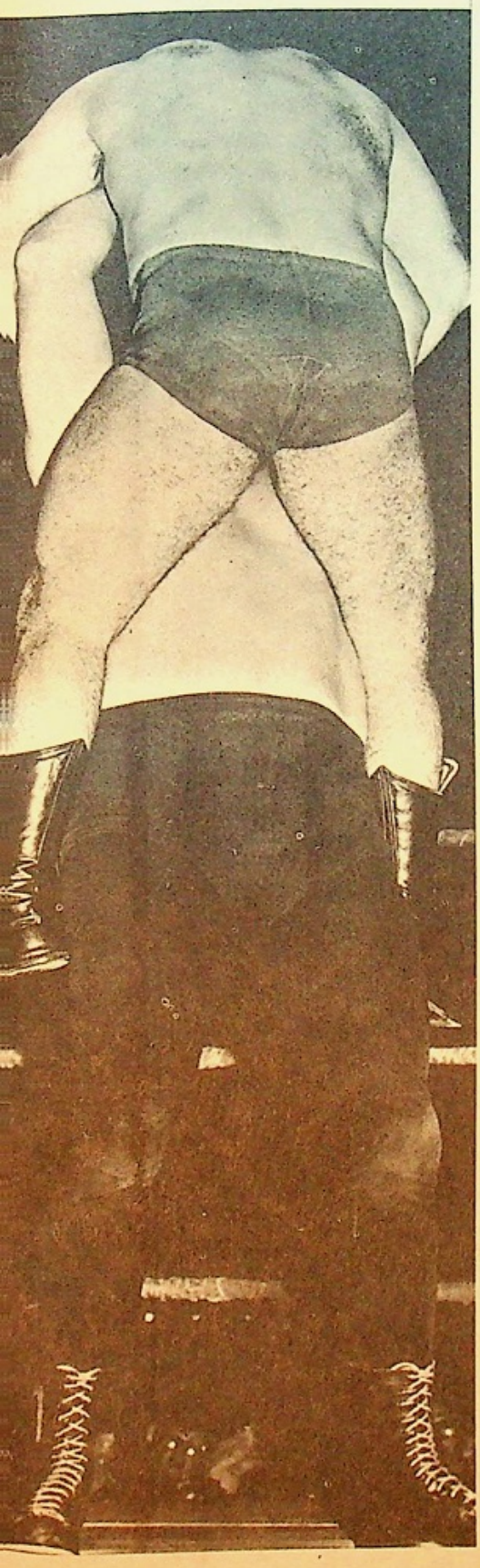


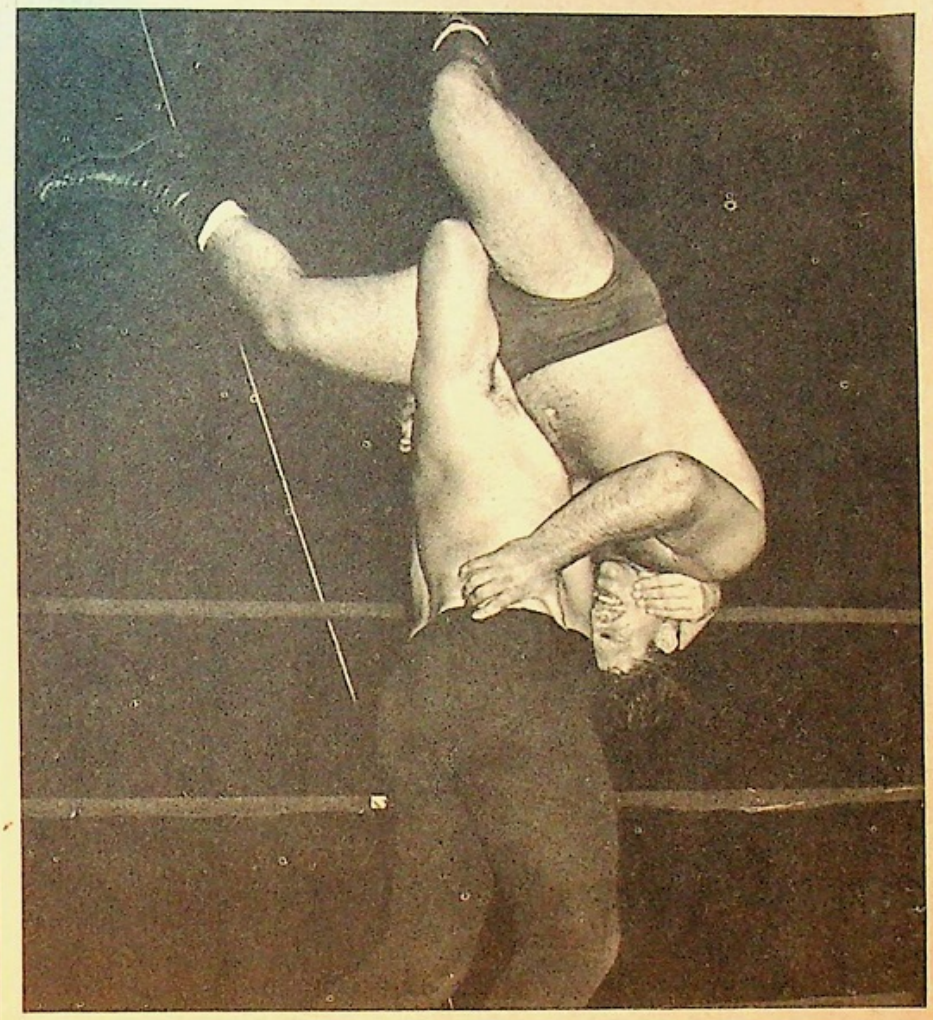


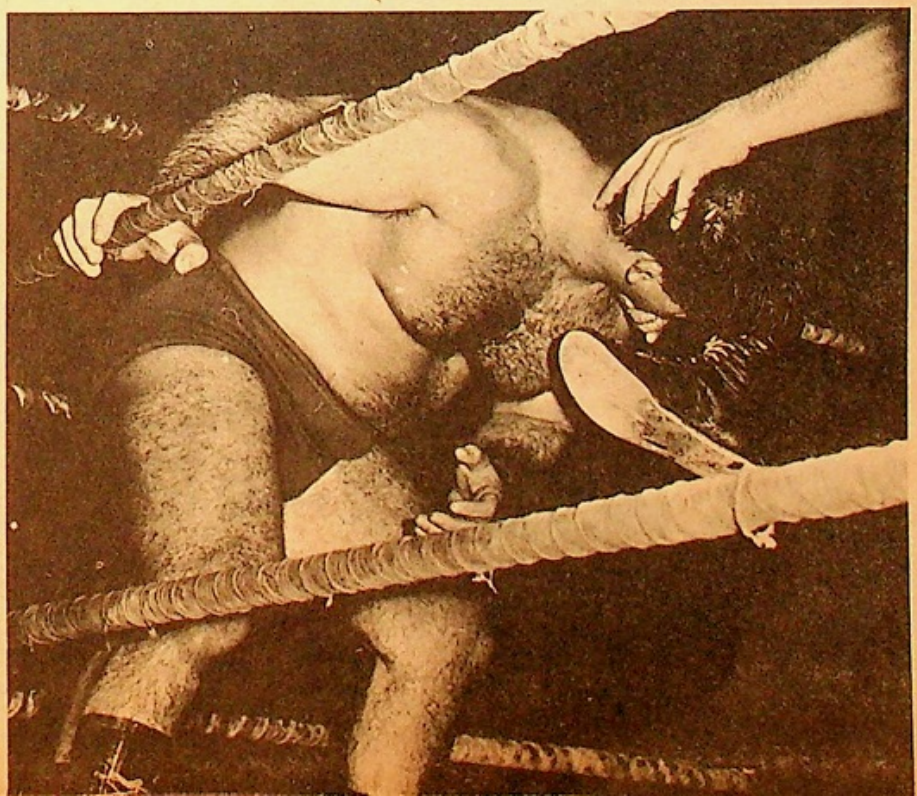


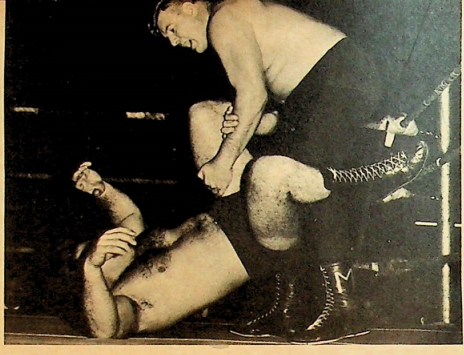
Every trick in the book — and a few new ones — have been used by Von Erich in his desperate efforts to triumph over Sammartino. Many times he has come close, a few times he was able through foul play to force Bruno to yield, but never has he been able to pin Sammartino and capture the prized championship.

BRUNO VS MILLER

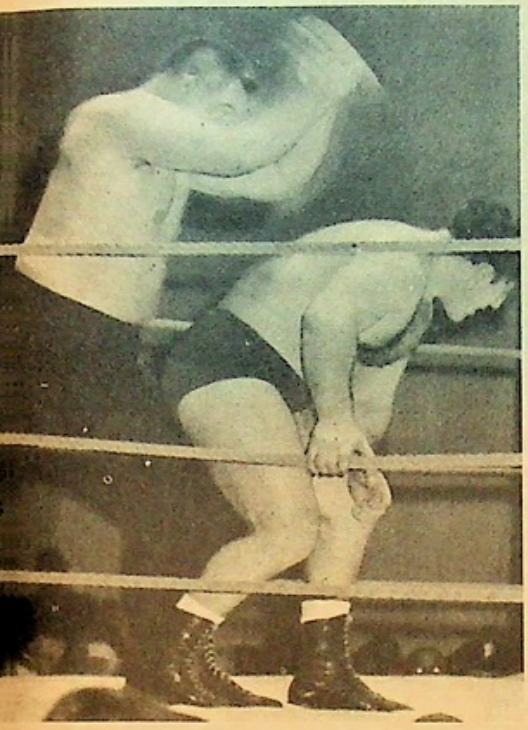


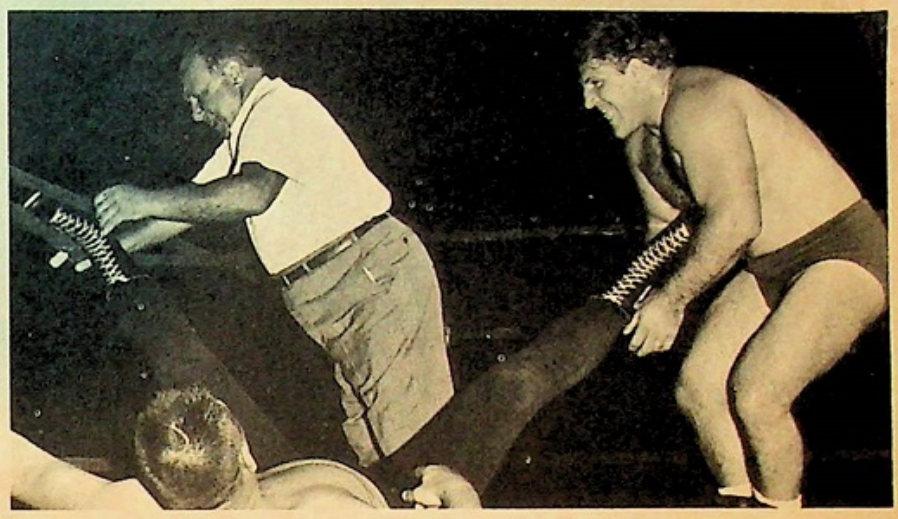


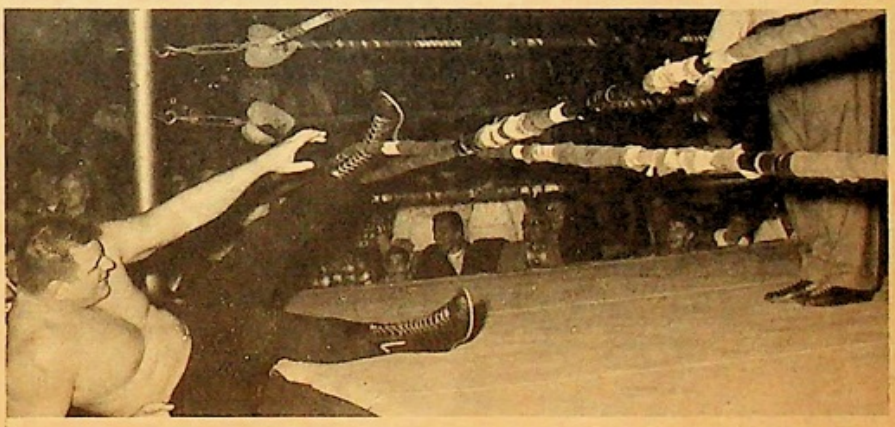




From far and wide came the challengers of Sammartino. Dr. Bill Miller, the huge, skillful, crafty and powerful giant, has been often called by Sammartino "my toughest opponent". Miller came closest to being able to match Bruno in sheer power and strength, but. . .

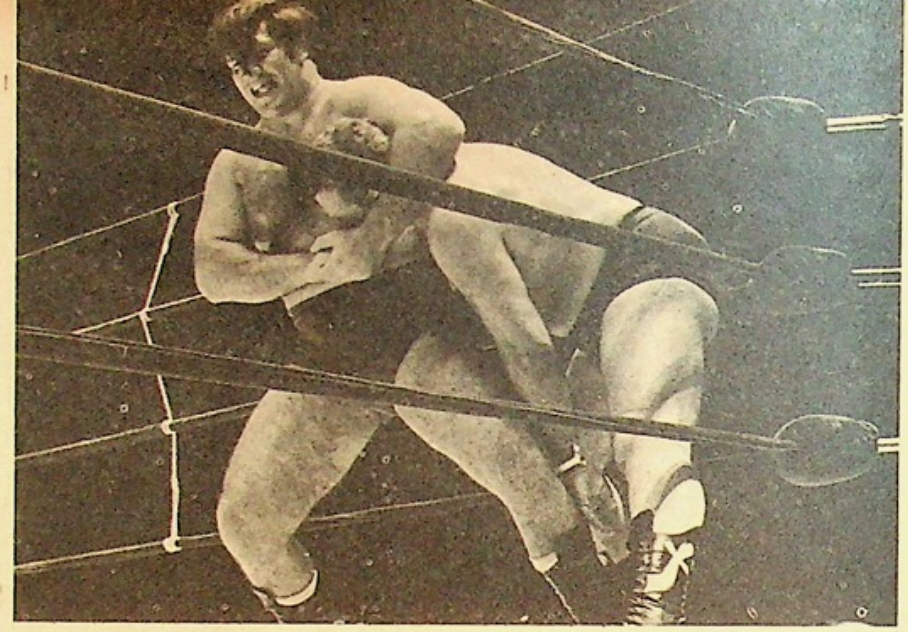


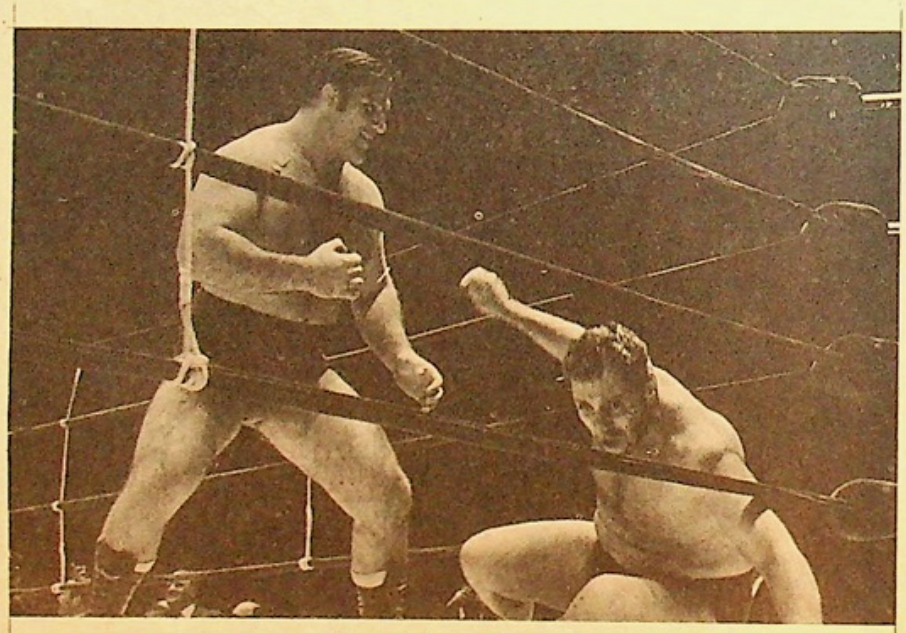




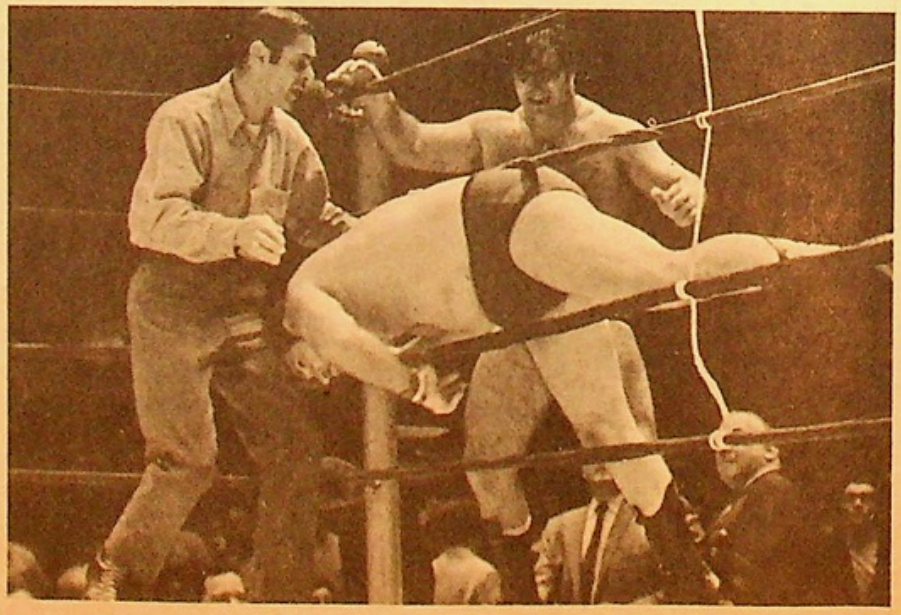
the determination and desire to win has always been the something extra that Sammartino has been able to call on. When things looked darkest, he has called on this reserve to carry him to victory.

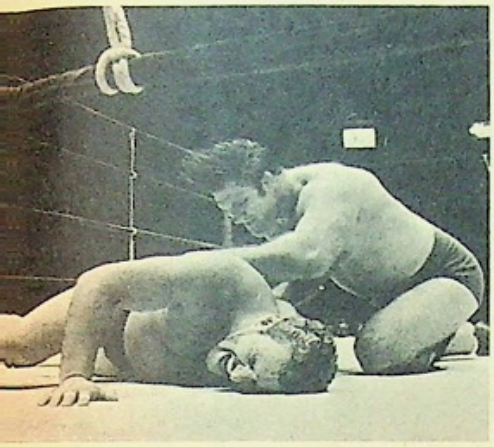
BRUNO VS THE SHEIK

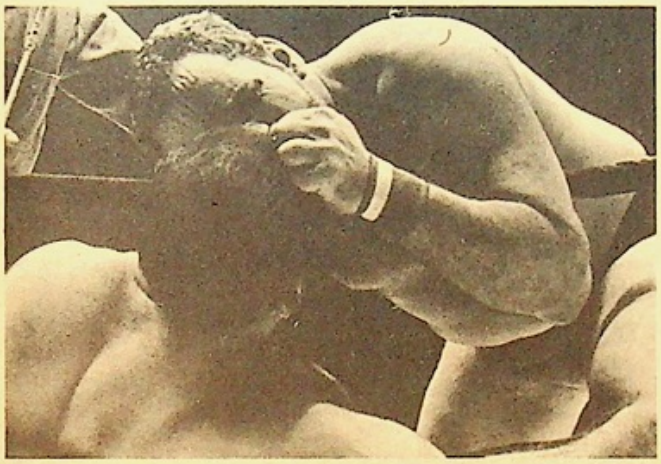


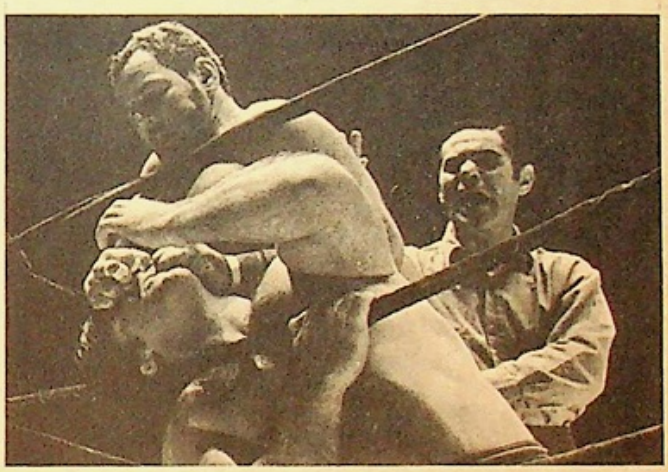


The maniac from Syria, The Sheik, ripped and tore his way to a victory of a sort of Sammartino when the referee would not let Bruno continue due to the seriousness of the wound ripped open in Bruno's face by the "fangs" of The Sheik.



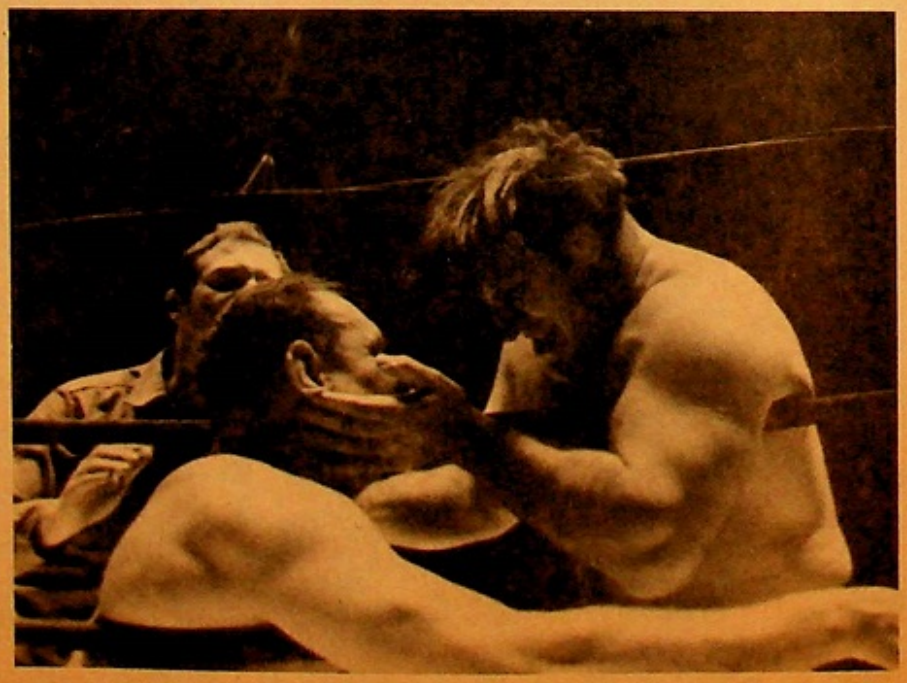


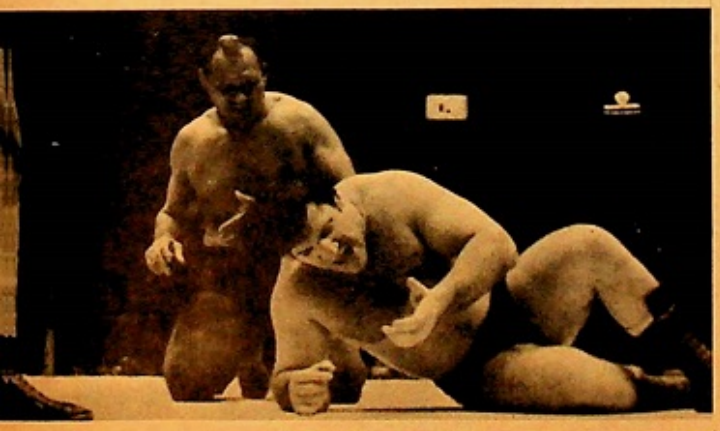




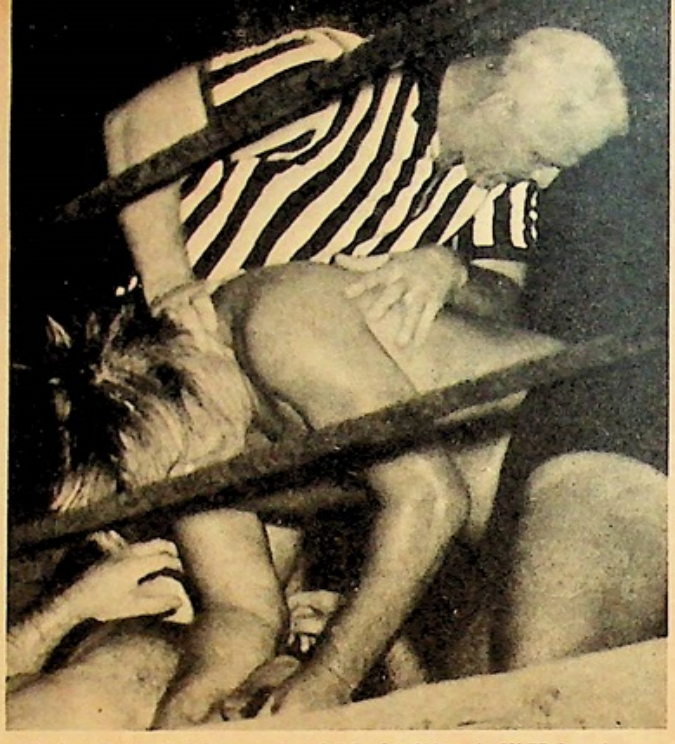
BRUNO VS KOWALSKI

One of the most frightening holds that Bruno has come up against is the deadly "Claw" employed by Killer Kowalski. The Polish giant has been another challenger who has come uncomfortably close to lifting Bruno's belt during their exciting series of matches shown on these pages.



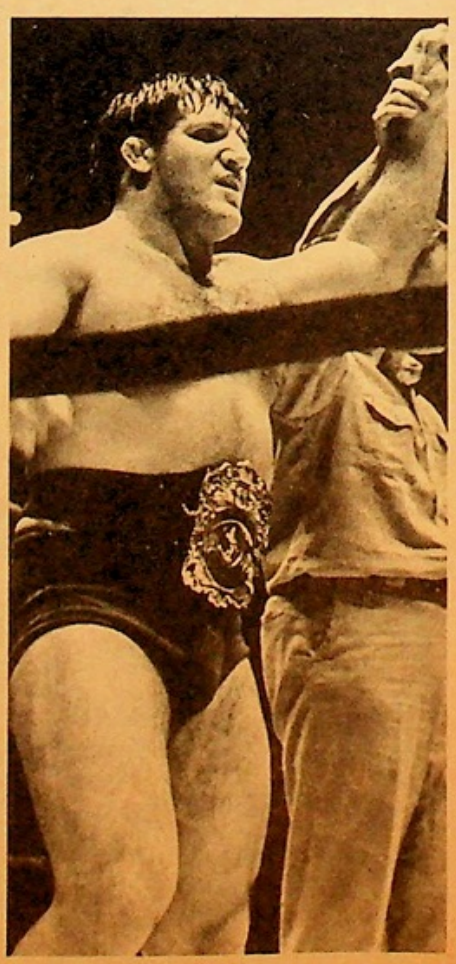


BRUNO VS VALENTINE



"Wildman" Johnny Valentine and Bruno engaged in a brutal bloody battle in Baltimore, in which the "Crazied" Valentine went completely out of control and referee Ed Blake found it almost impossible to restore order as the battle raged in and out of the ring.

The 20-count disqualification rule for being out of the ring was waived for this brawl, as both men would have quickly been losers if it had not.



After a titanic struggle Sammartino was the winner!

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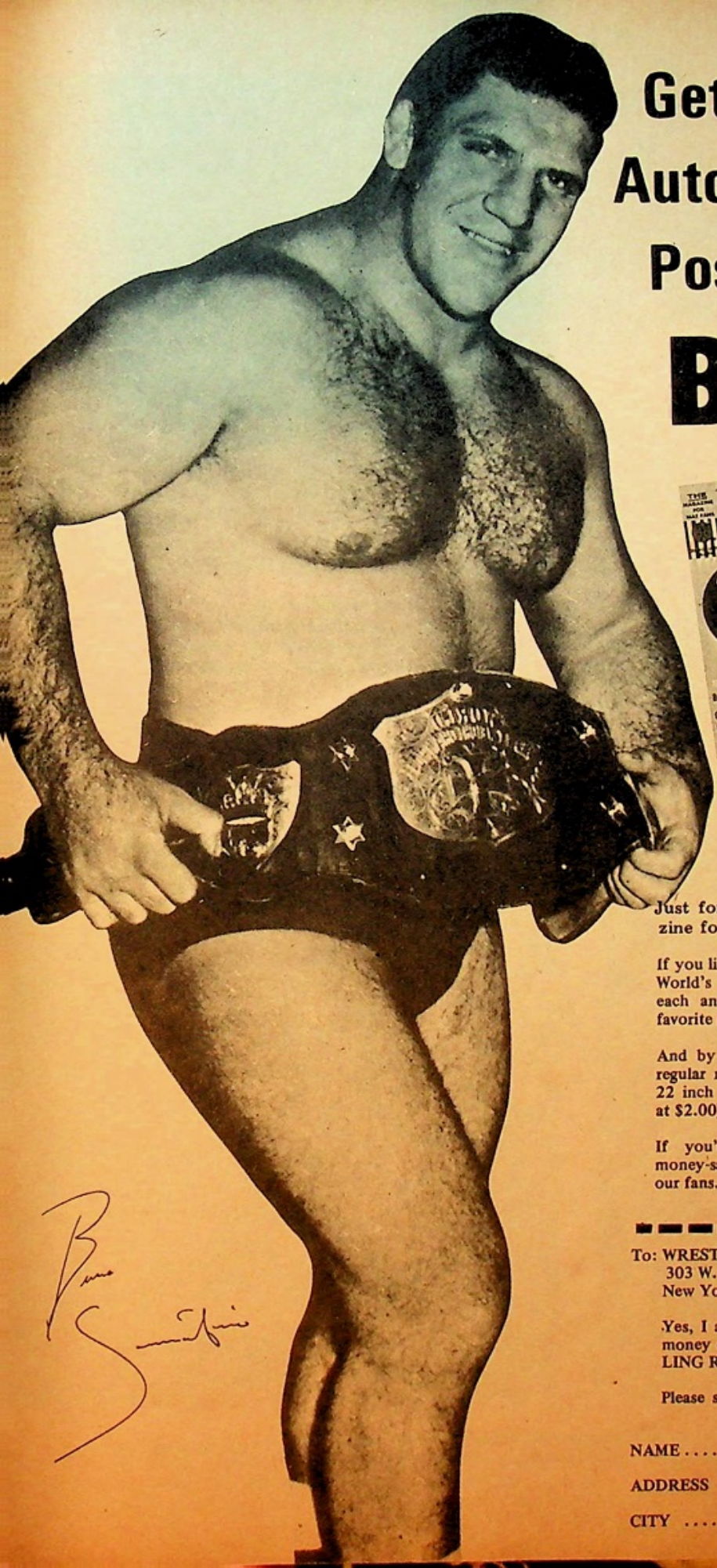

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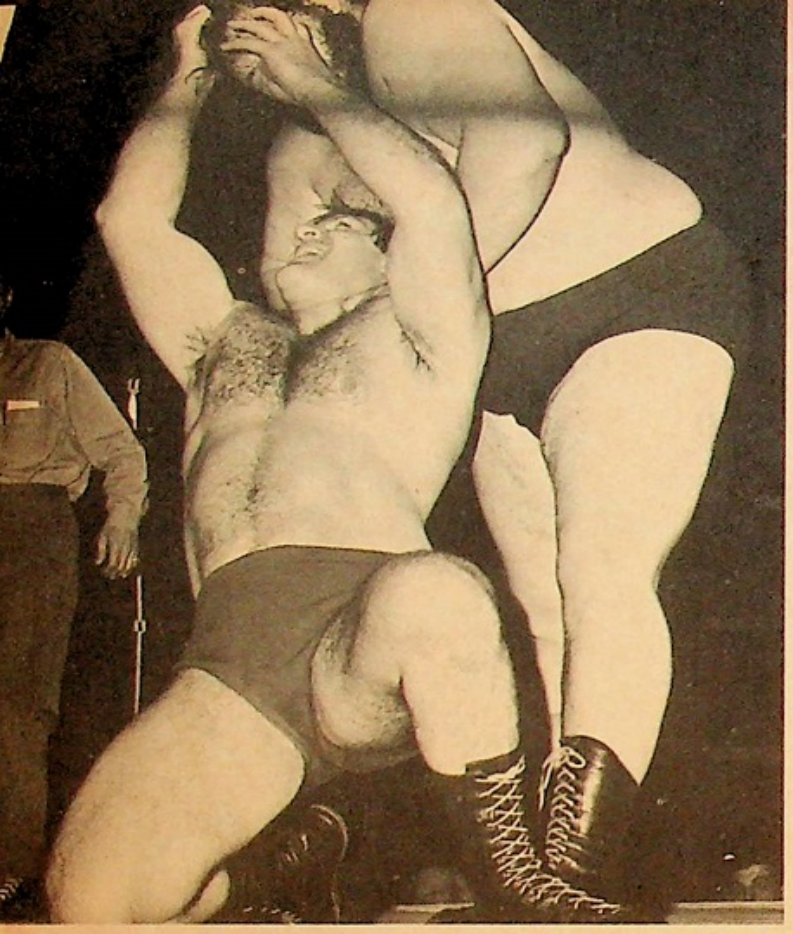
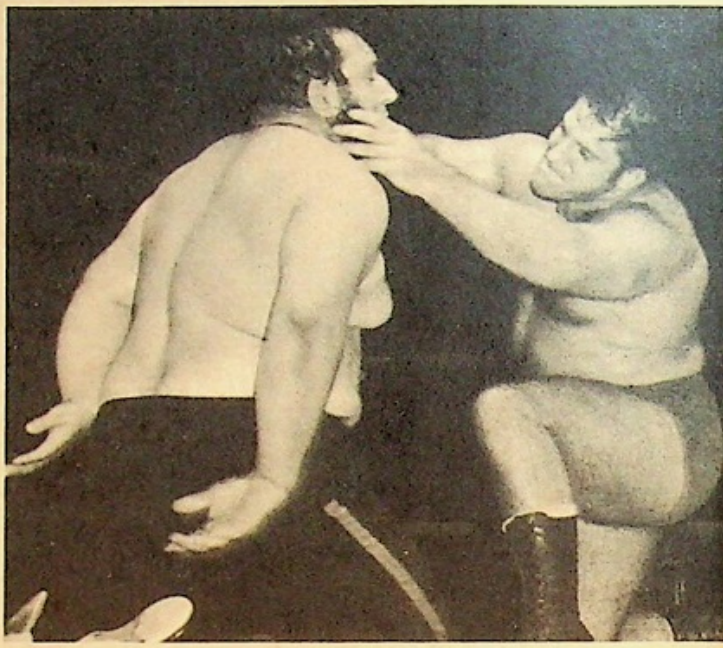
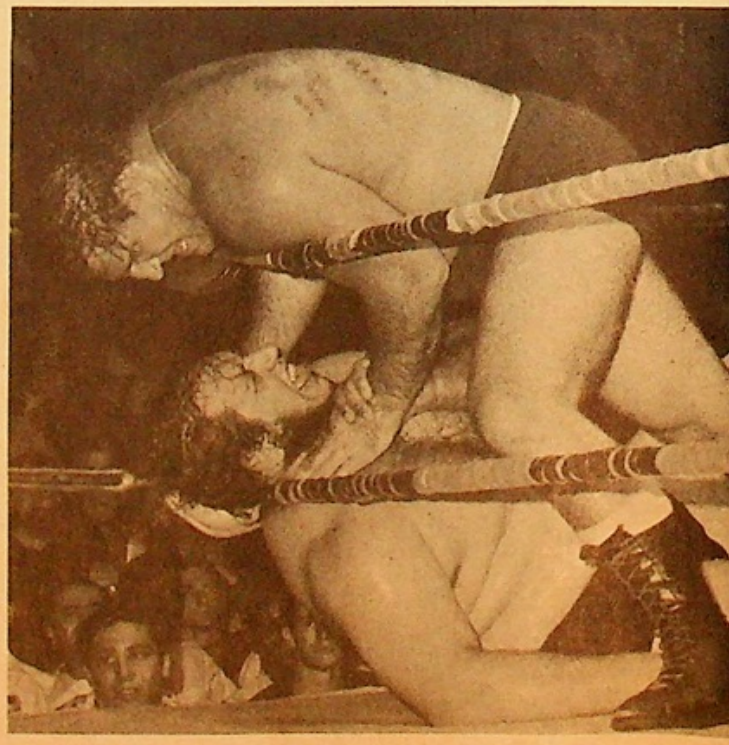


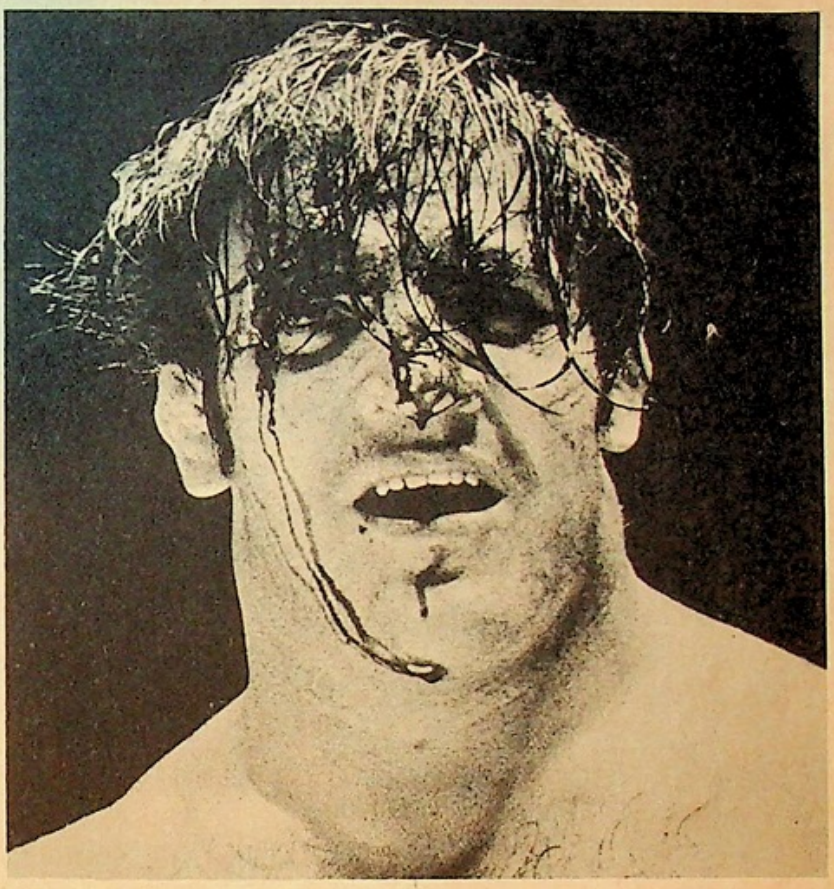


Now friends, and occasional tag-team partners, Bruno and Gorilla Monsoon fought some vicious "wars" a few years back. The foul tactics of Monsoon so enraged Bruno that he went in for some ungentlemanly hair-pulling.

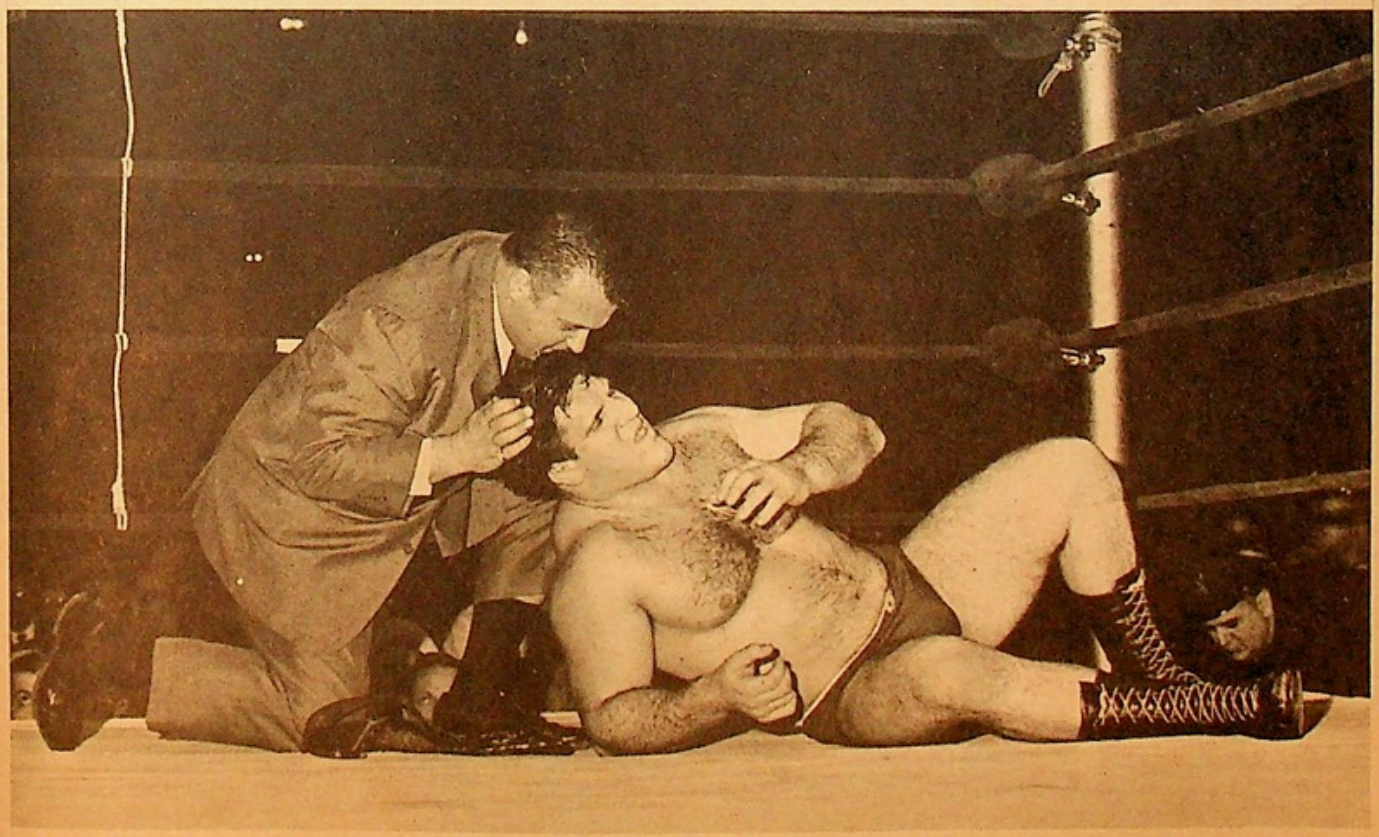
BRUNO VS MONSOON



Whether it was in a single match or part of a tag bout, when Bruno and Gorilla hooked up, it was an all-out feud, with neither asking or giving an inch.

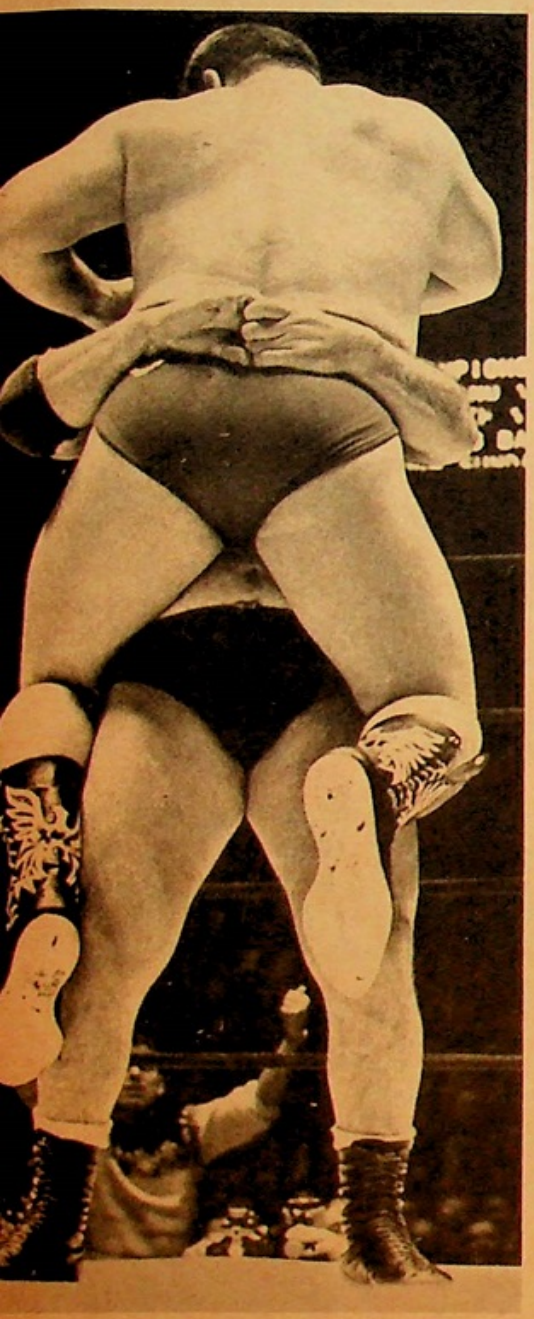


These two photos of a badly battered and bloody Bruno show the effects of beatings handed him on two different occasions by Monsoon.

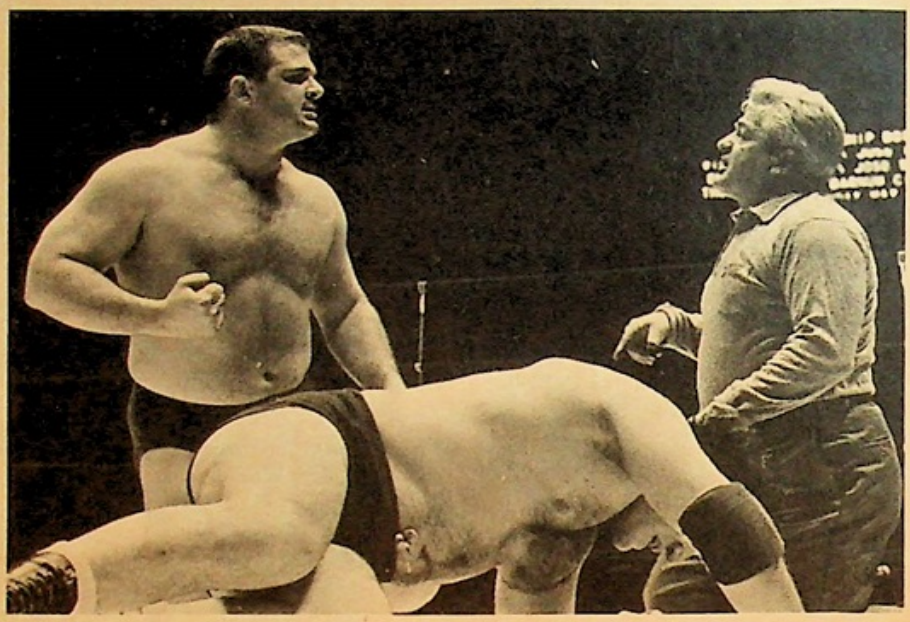


Arnold Skoaland, friend and sometime manager of Sammartino, comes to his aid after he was brutally beaten by Monsoon and declared a winner on a disqualification. The huge 300-pound Monsoon was a difficult foe, and since teaming up, Bruno has said: "I'm glad to have him on my side now."

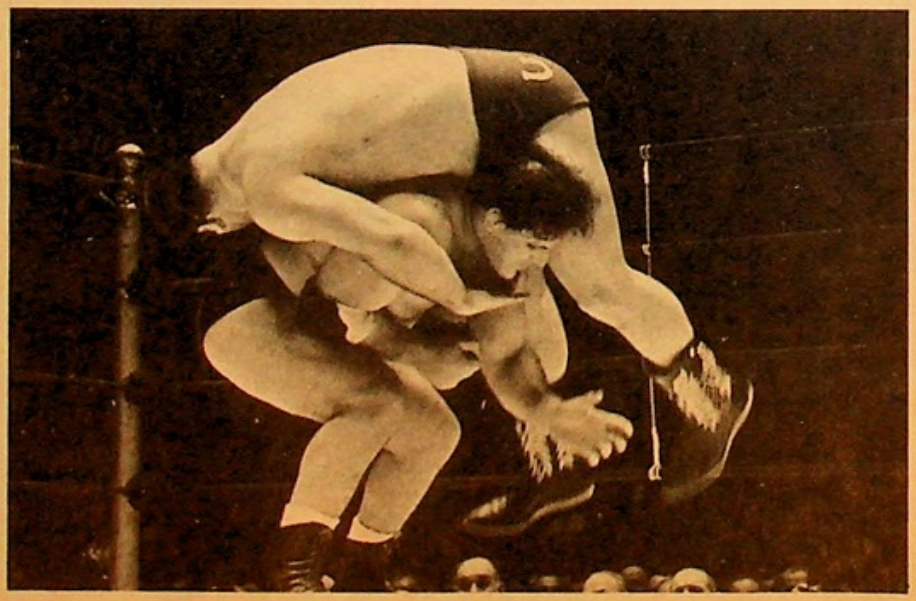
BRUNO VS WATTS



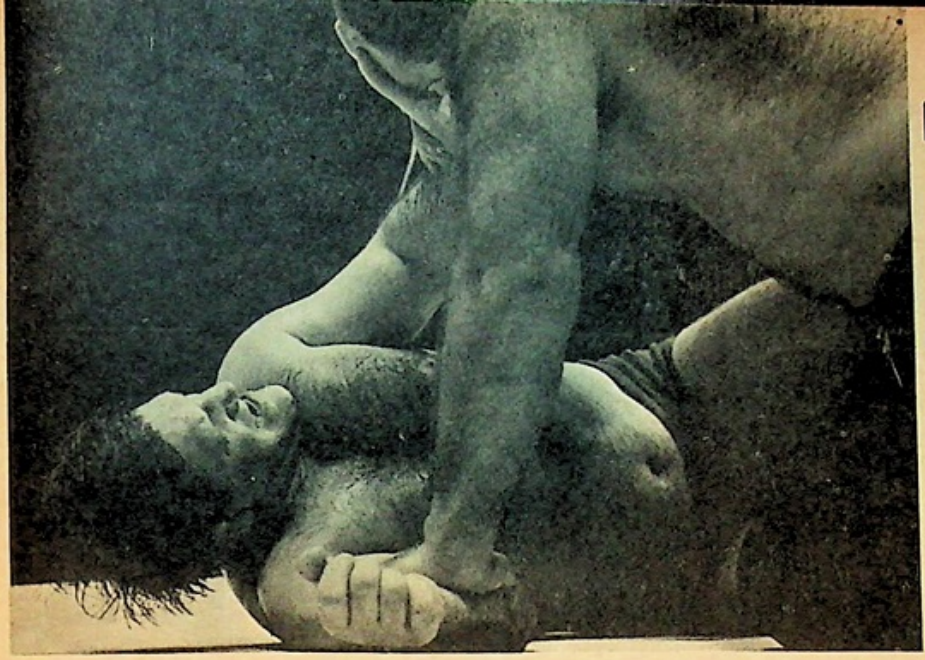
"Cowboy" Bill Watts was a real surprised young fellow when Bruno lifted his 6ft. 8 inch, 300-pound frame with ease in a bear-hug.



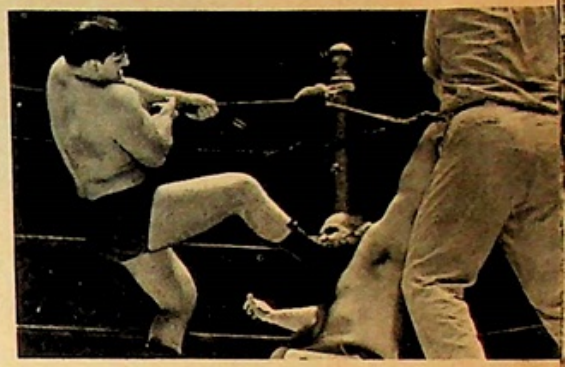
Watts, a strong and violent man, gave Bruno a series of torrid tussles.



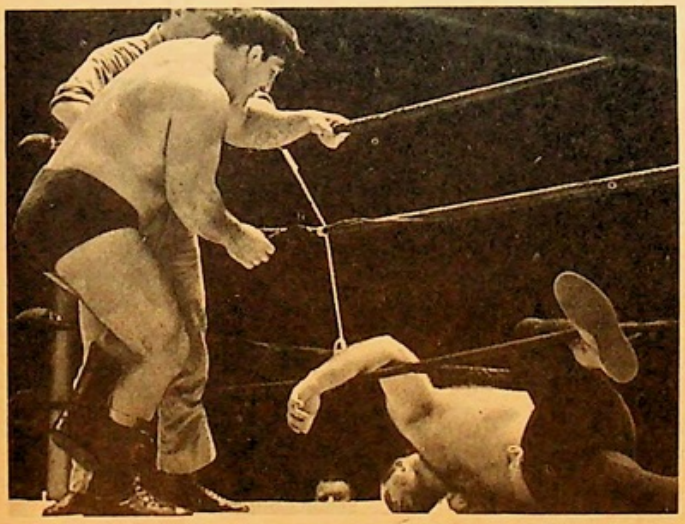
Sammartino's great strength was never more in evidence than when he tossed Watts around like a small child.

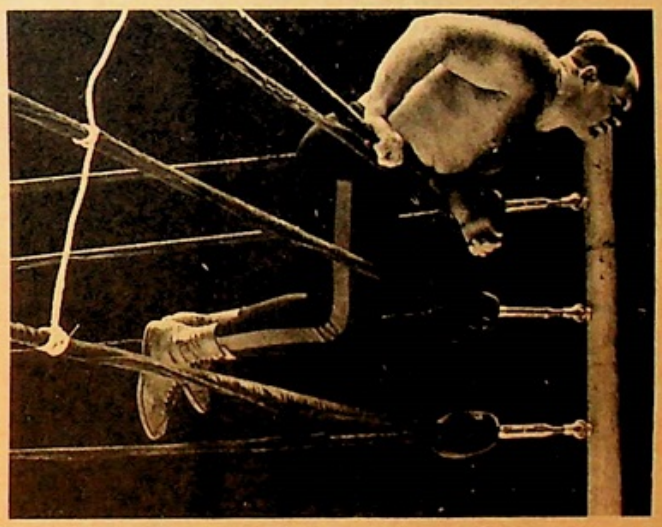


BRUNO VS STEELE

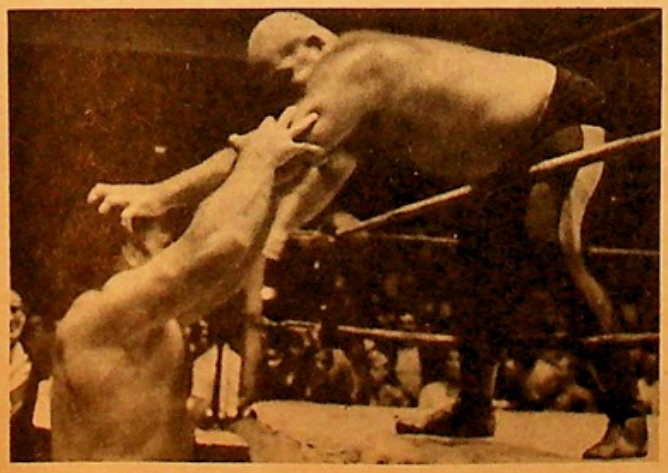


The Grizzly George Steele is another who pitted his strength against that of Sammartino, and like those before him he came up a loser.



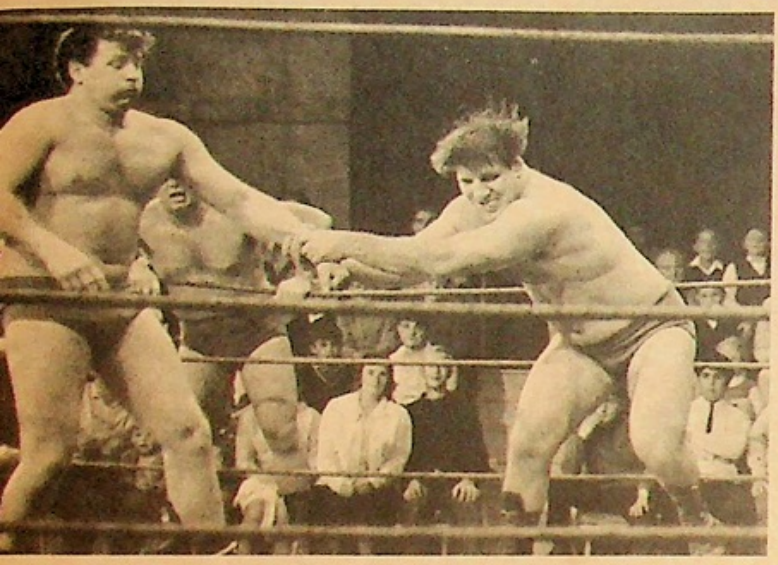


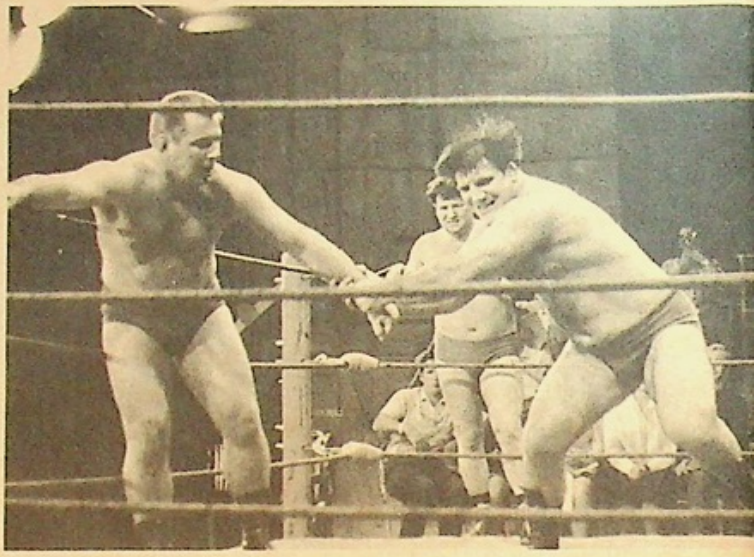
Steele was tossed around like a sack of sand by Sammartino, who — angered by the dirty doings of George — let his fury take over.



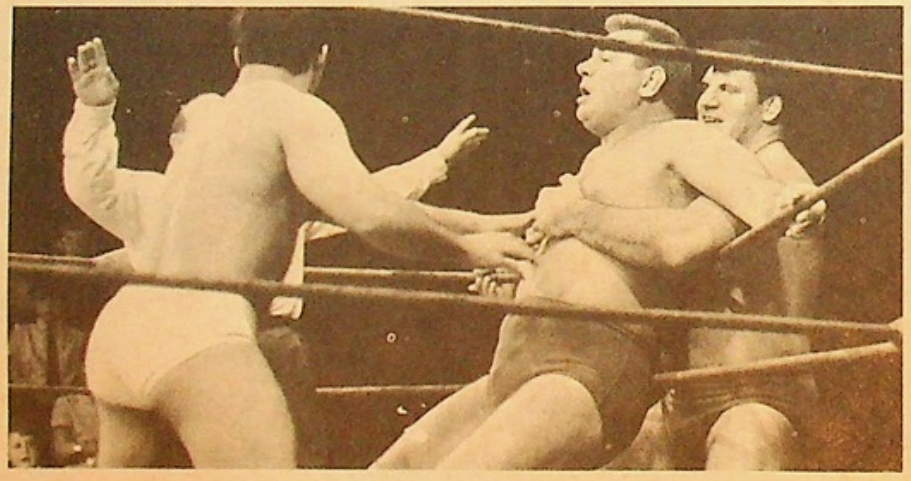
Frustrated in every way, Steele even tried in vain to use a table to subdue Sammartino.

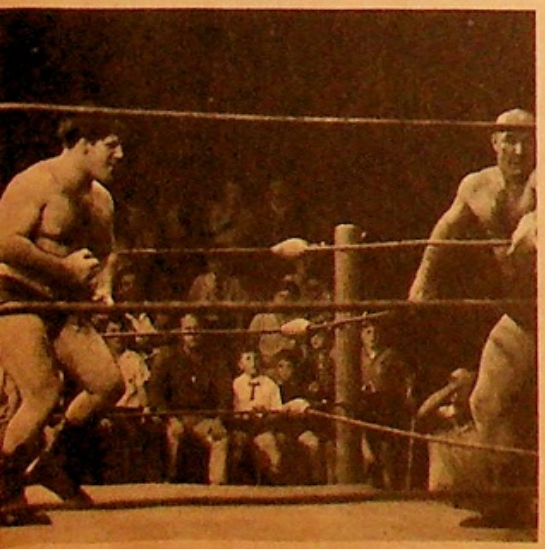
BRUNO IN AUSTRALIA

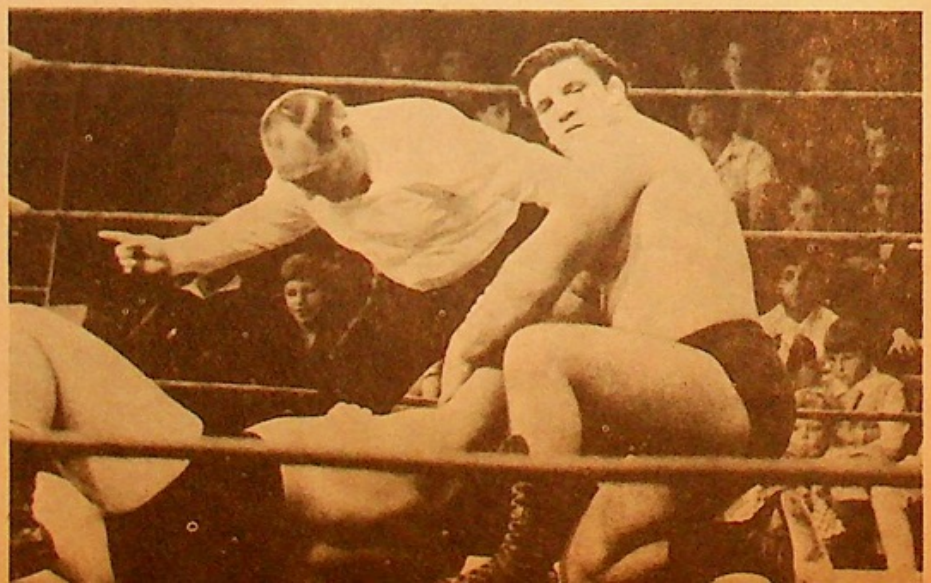


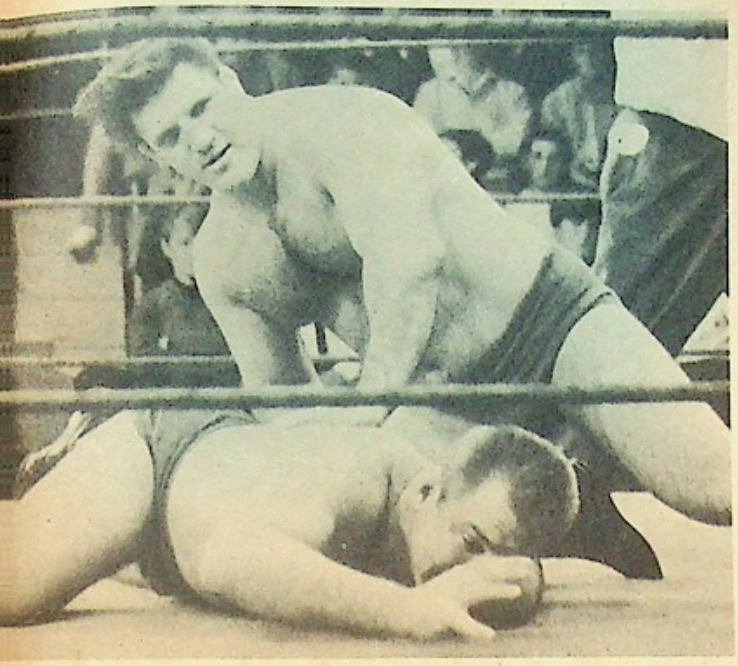


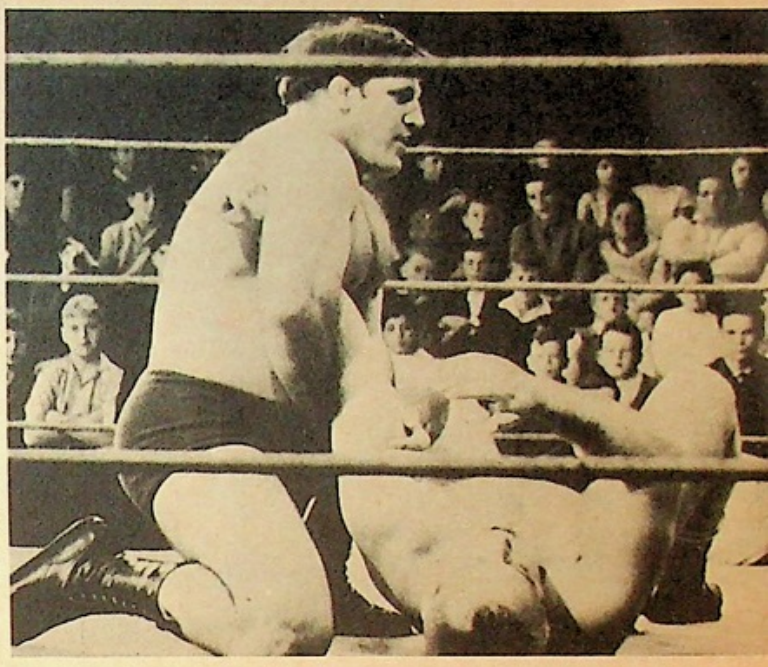
Sammartino scored a tremendous hit when he visited Australia. In both single and tag-team matches Bruno wowed the fans. His great strength and competitive spirit was a big "Plus" in winning the fans to his side.



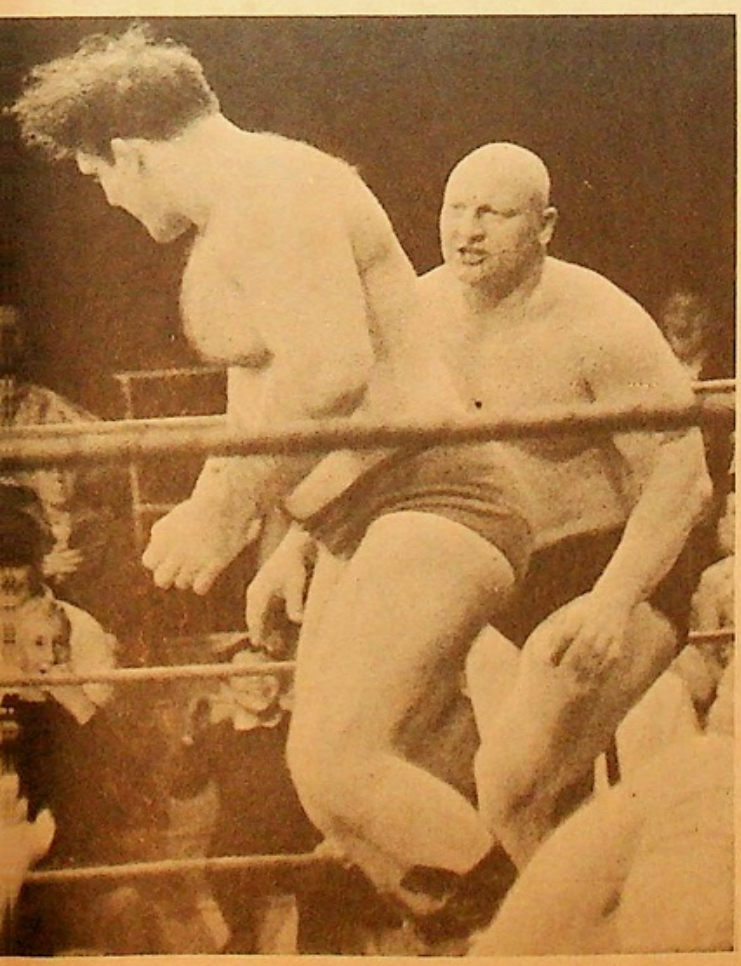


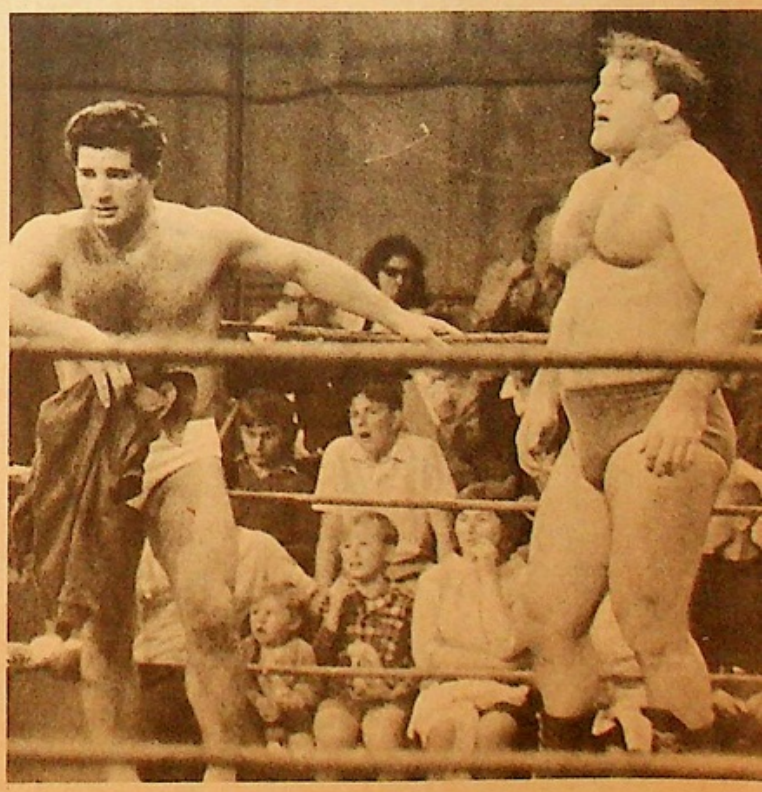




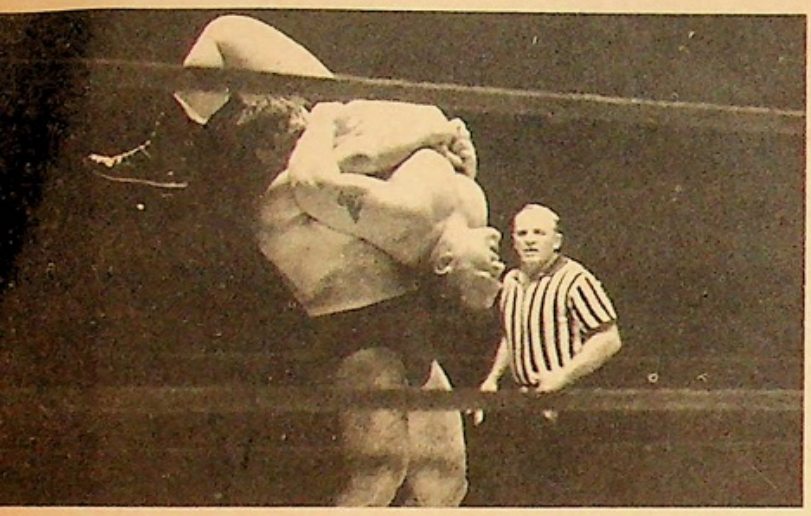


In matches against such stars as Dan Miller, Skull Murphy, Brute Bernard, and Hans Schroder he showed the fans down under why he is the Greatest!

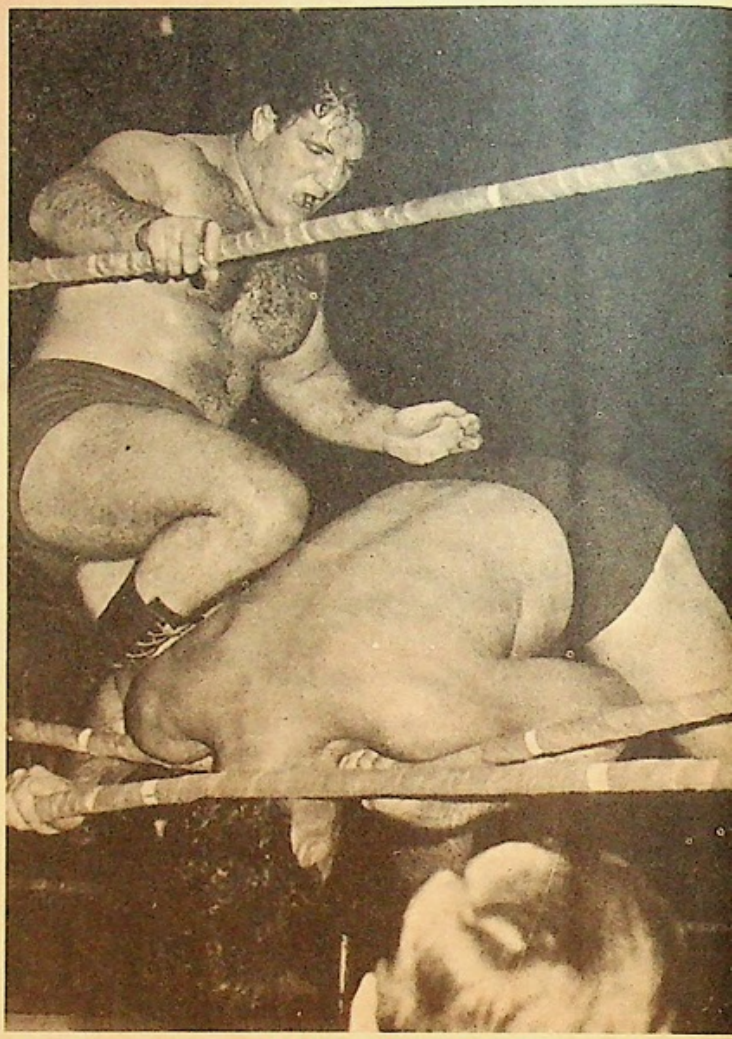




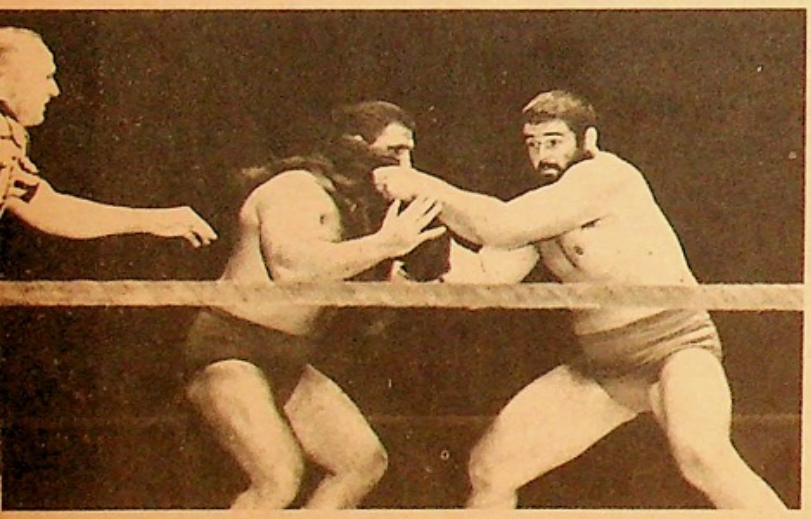
BRUNO IN ACTION



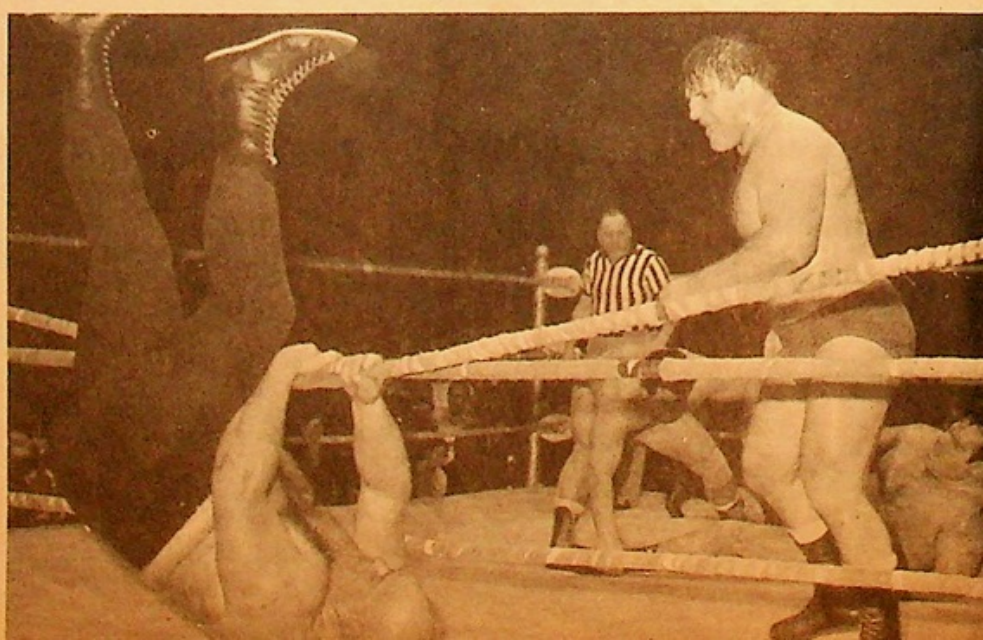
"Bulldog" Brower, trapped in a "back-breaker," begs for mercy.



Baron Scicluna gets paid back twofold for his attempt to do injury to Bruno, who drives him into the ground.

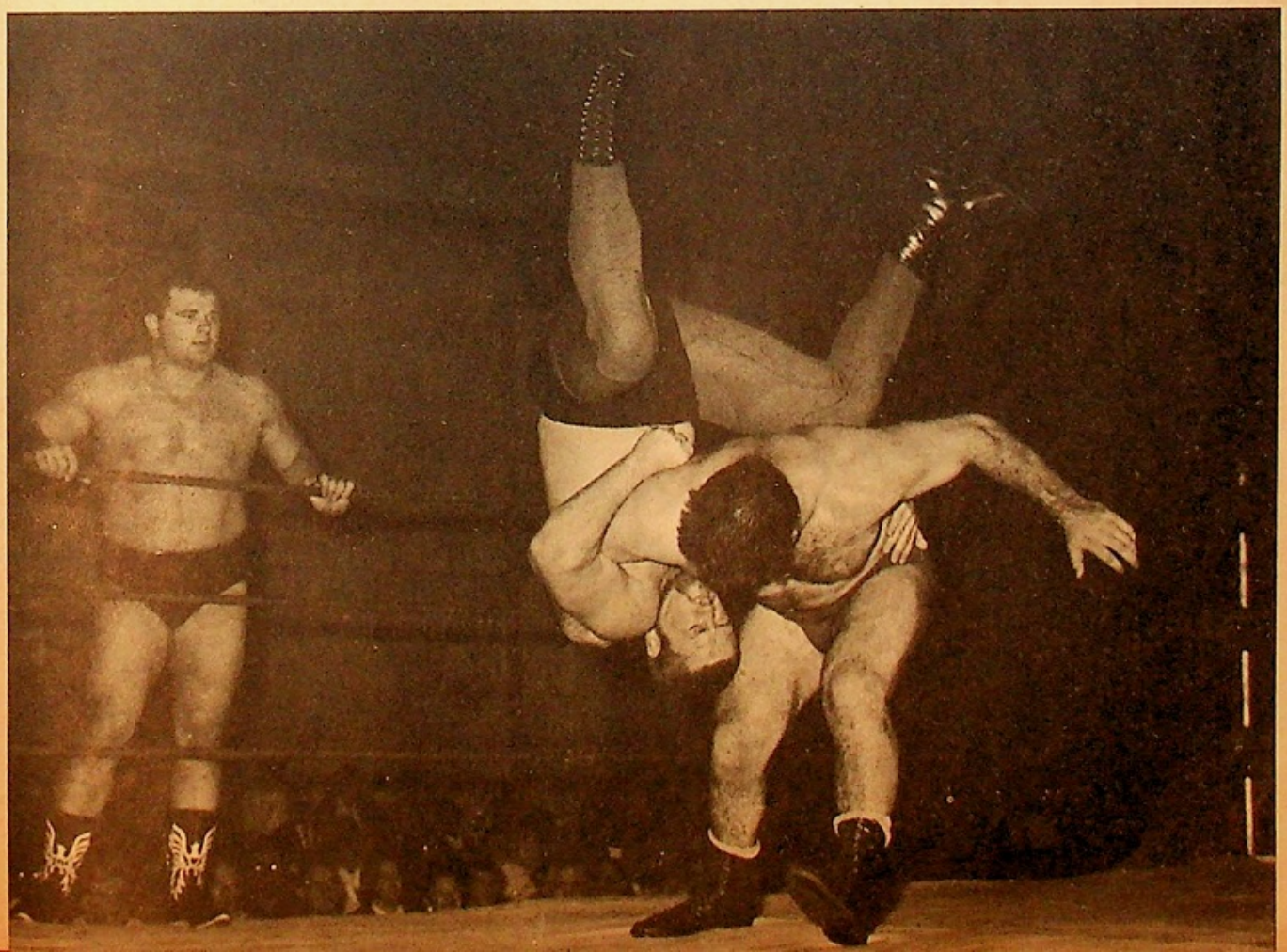


The Kentucky Butcher attacks Bruno before the opening bell, but in the end he, too, was a thoroughly beaten victim of Sammartino.

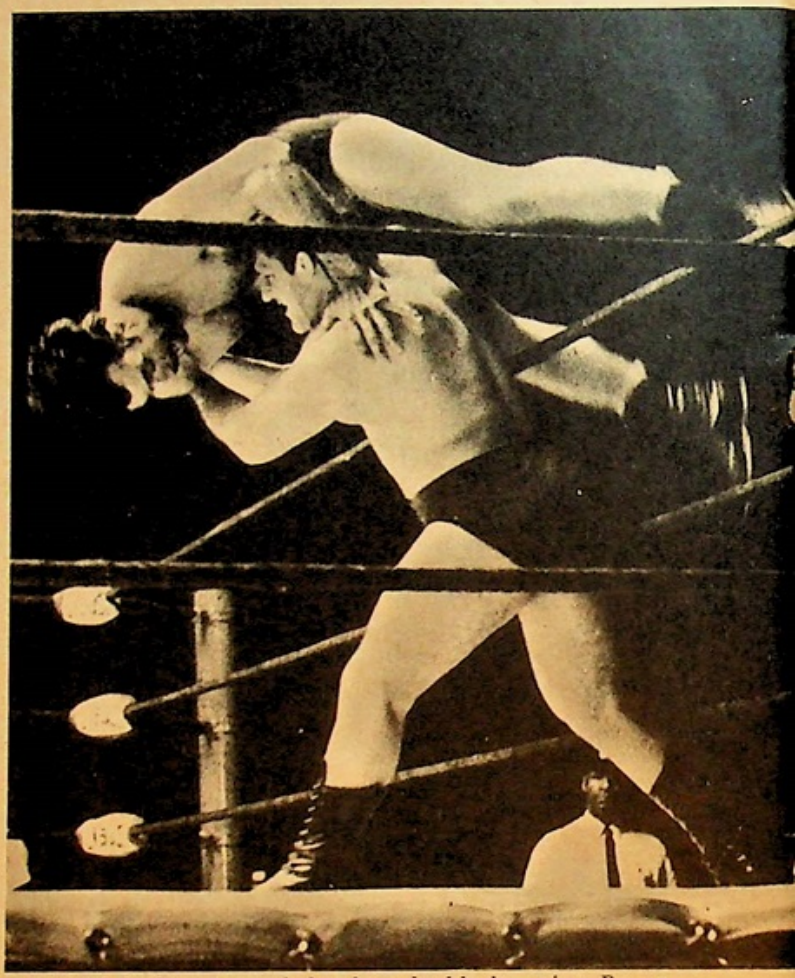


Tank Morgan gets the treatment from Bruno, while his tag-partner, Antonio Pugliese, works on Bull Ortega.

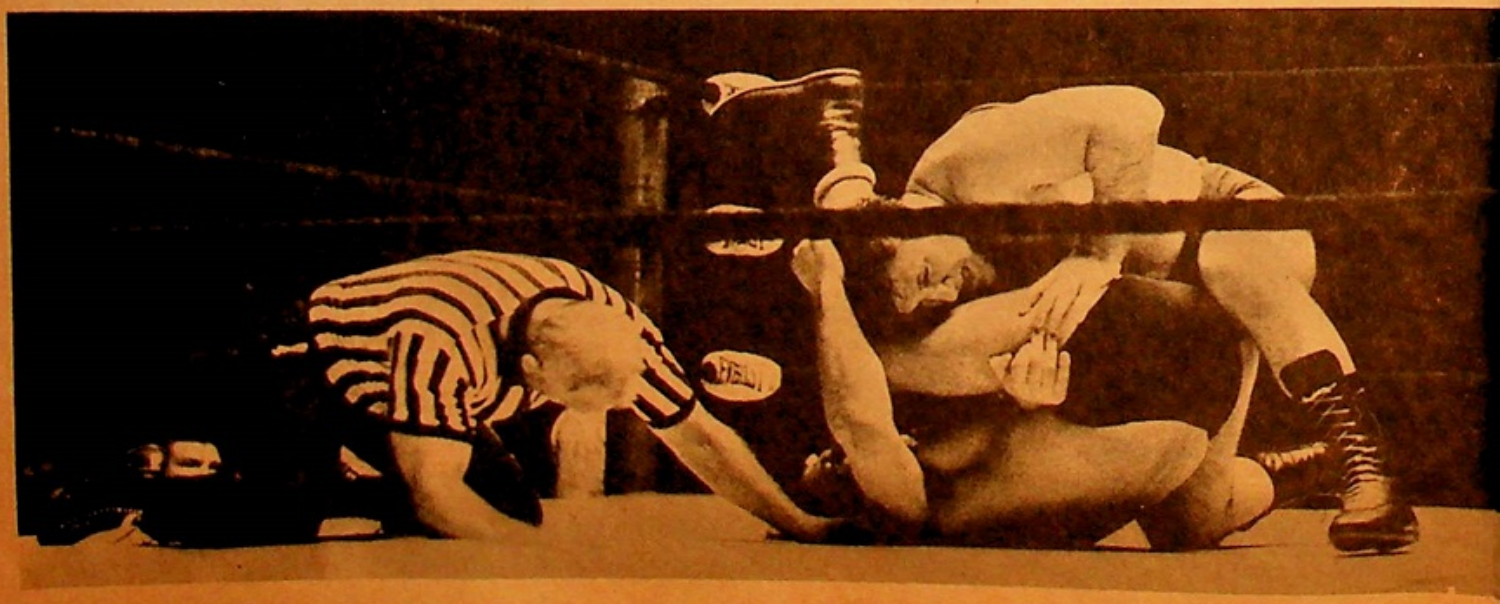
"Crazy Luke" Graham (above) and Gene Kelly (below) also learn that it doesn't pay to mess with Sammartino.

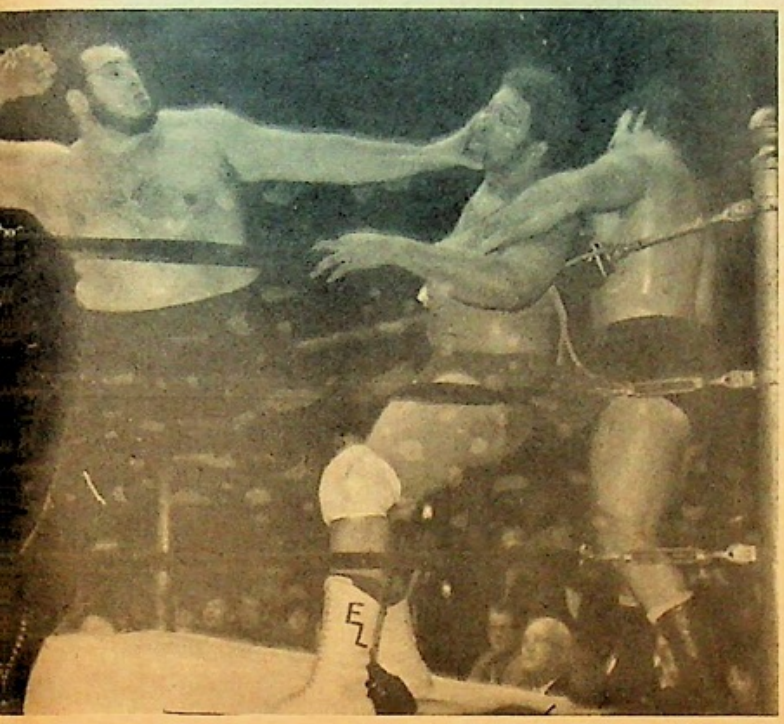


BRUNO IN TAG TEAM BOUTS

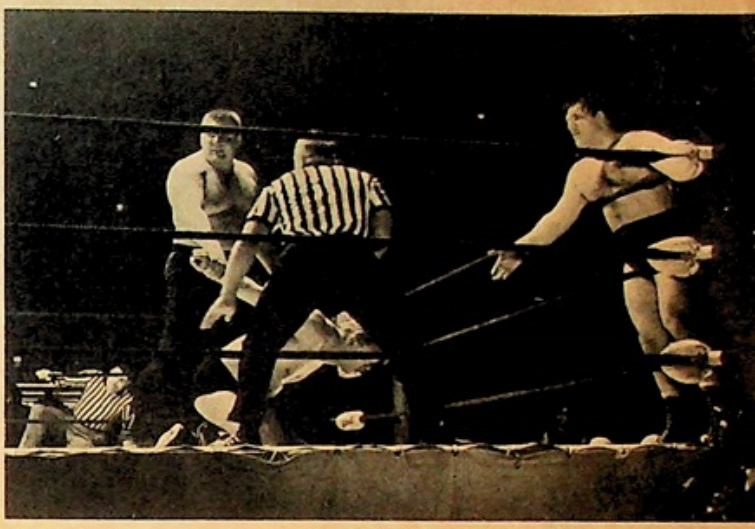


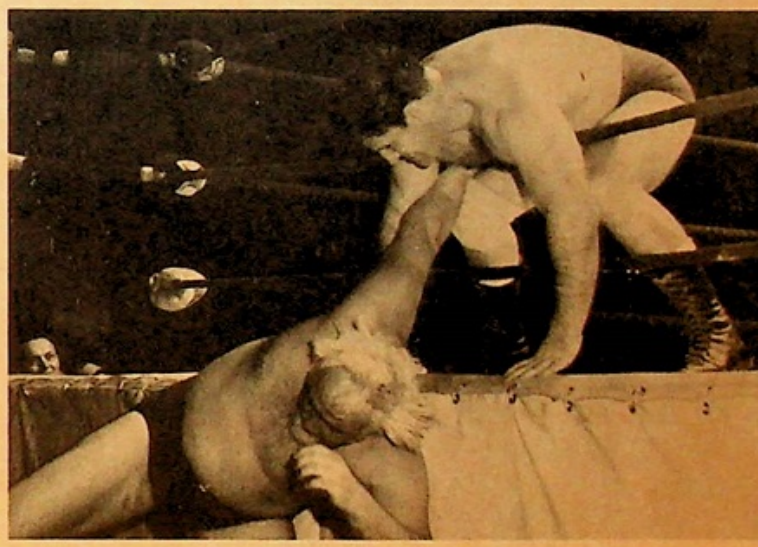
Although he has never tried to be a doublechampion, Bruno has helped a number of other grapplers gain the WWWF tag-team belt. In these photos Bruno teamed-up with Bill Watts, (left top and bottom) to defeat Baron Scicluna and Prince Iaukea (above) and Gorilla Monsoon and The Golden Terror.

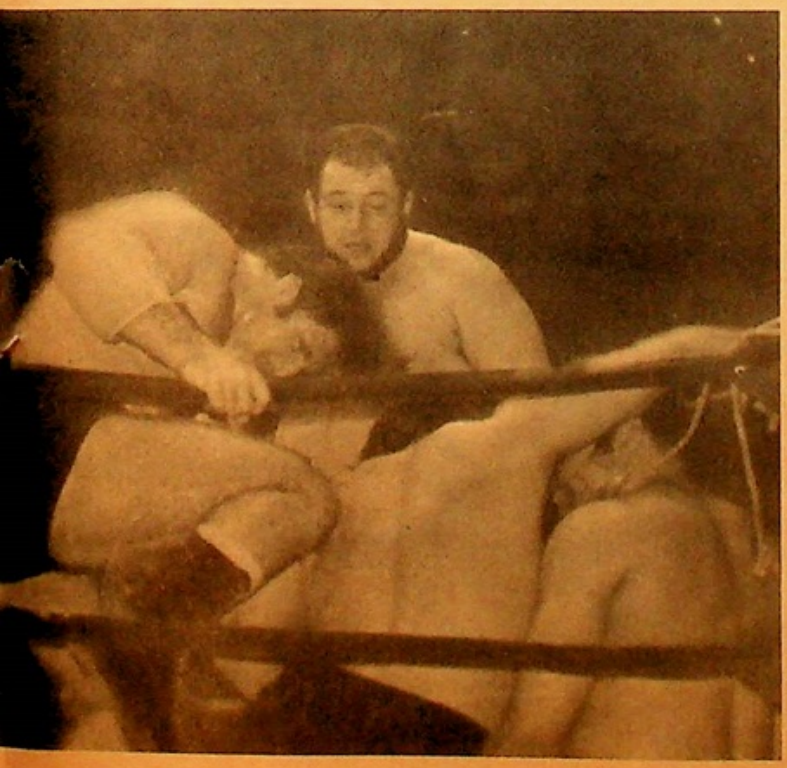


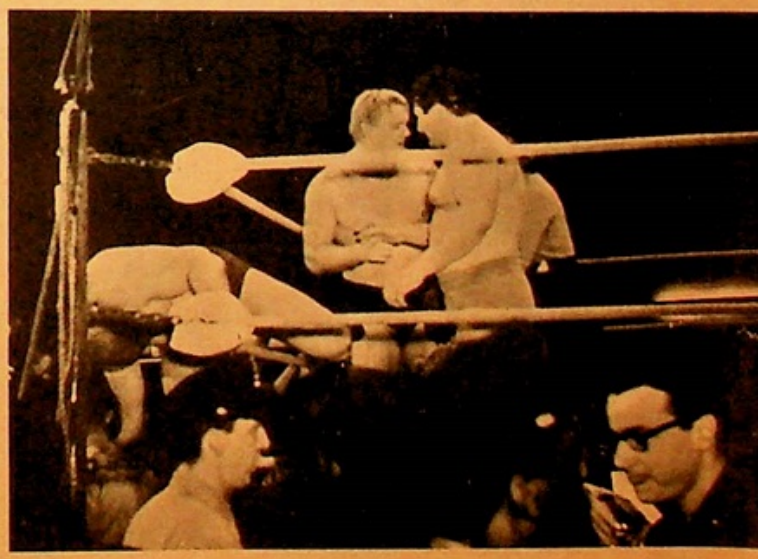


More recently Bruno and his old rival, Monsoon, have teamed-up and did a job on Ernie Ladd and Waldo Von Erich.









Bruno, along with his cousin, Antonio Pugliese, and Johnny Valentine went to work on Bill Miller, Luke Graham and The Beast. The great ability of Bruno is evident as he has been part of a tag-team championship duo on eight different occasions, never losing the belt, and only giving it up to concentrate on his single crown.

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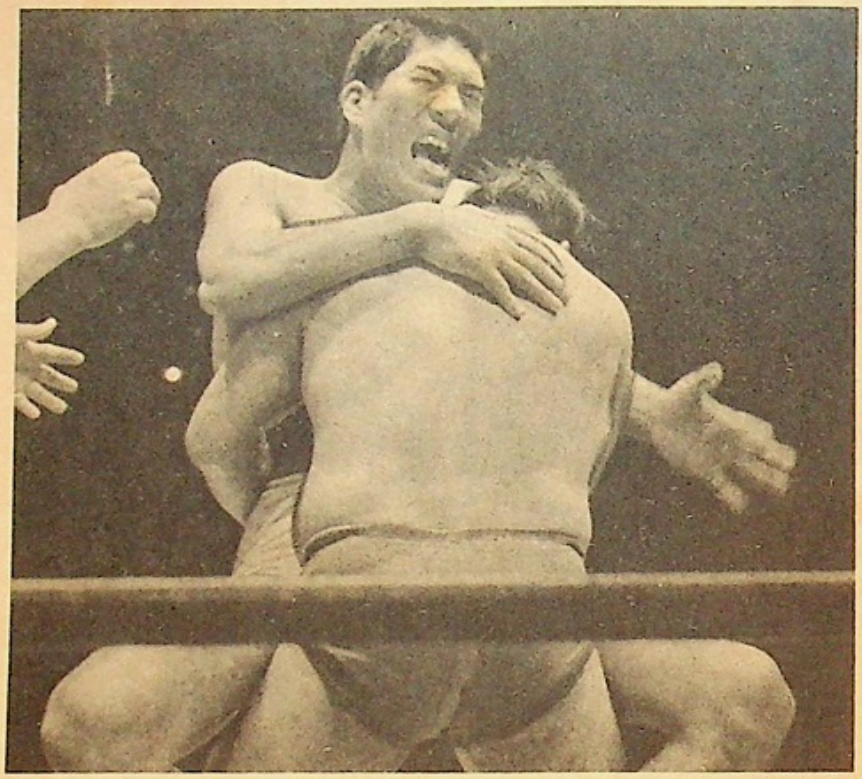
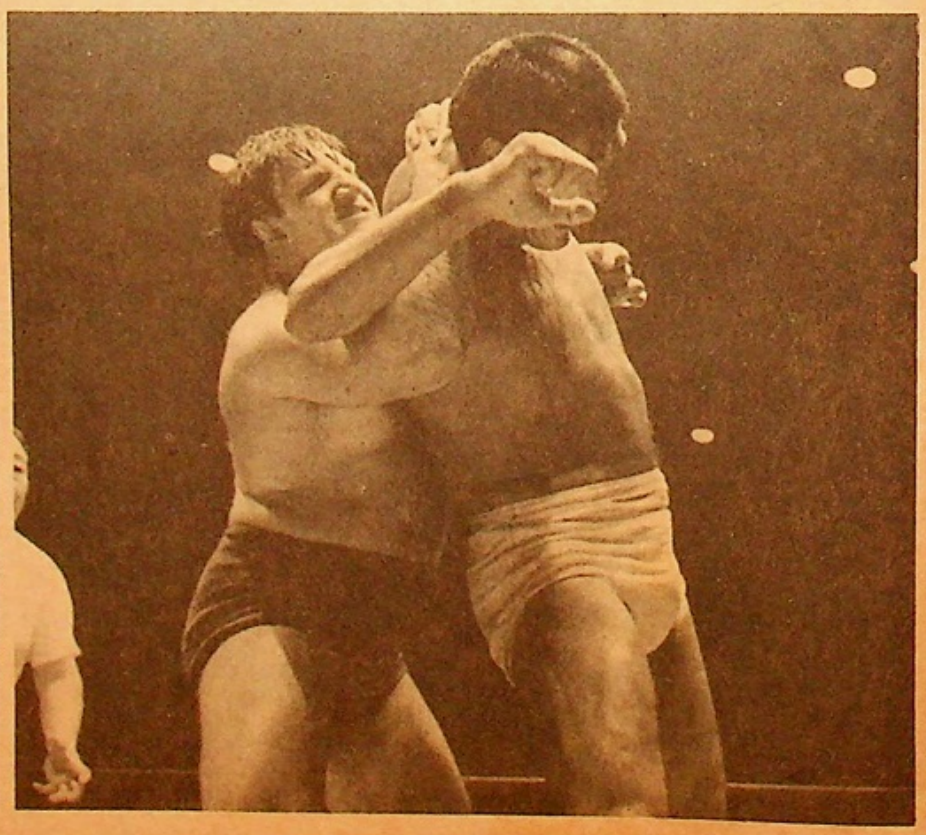
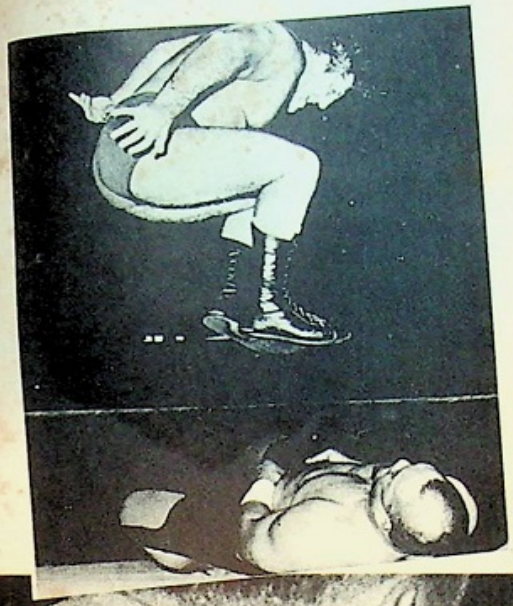
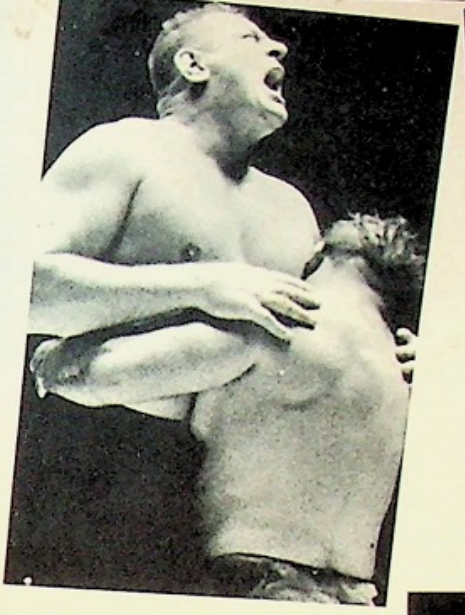
BRUNO IN JAPAN

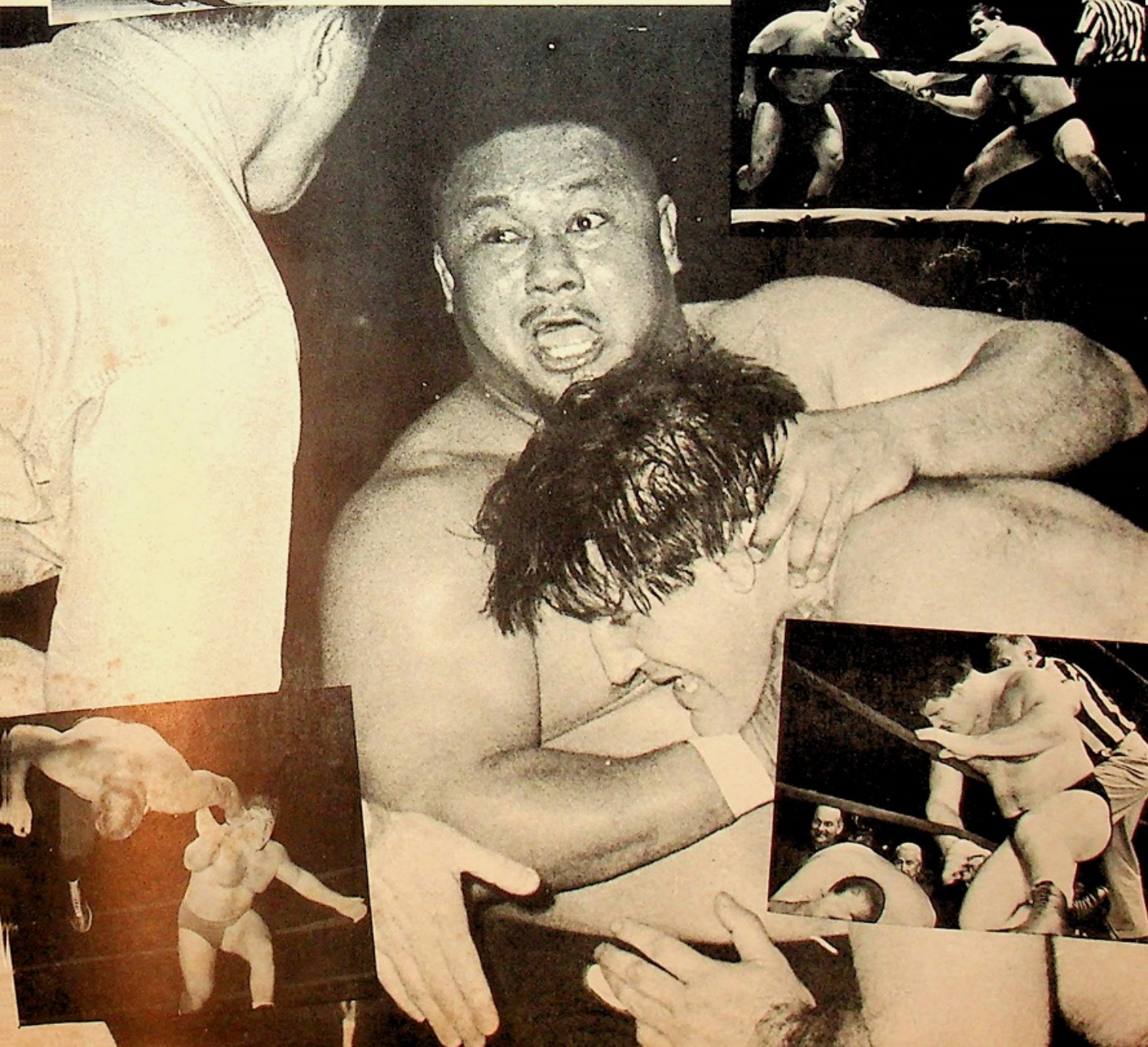


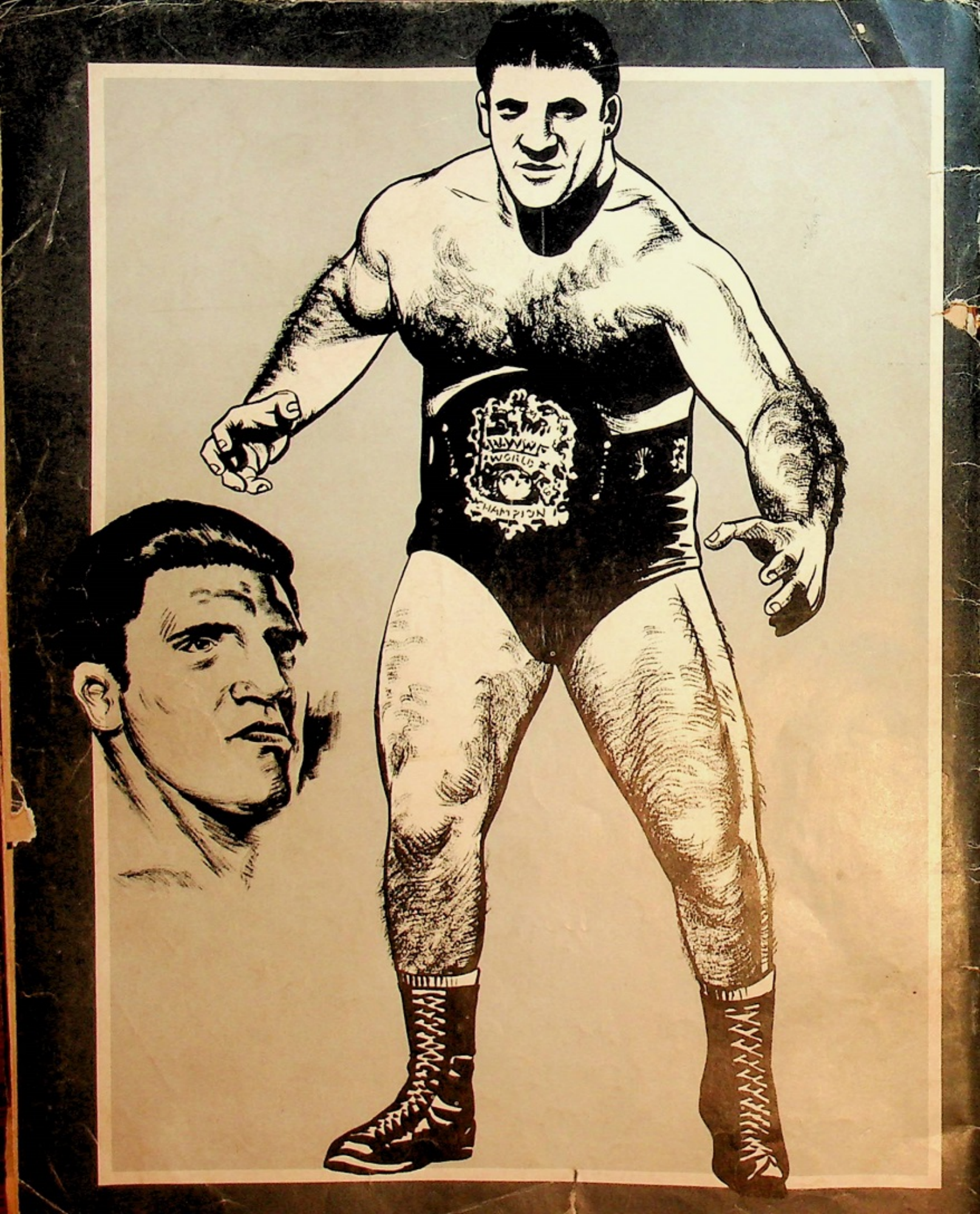
When Bruno traveled to Japan he clashed with the 7ft., 300-pound Giant Baba, who to his countrymen was unbeatable. They found out differently when Sammartino clamped on his bear-hug.







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